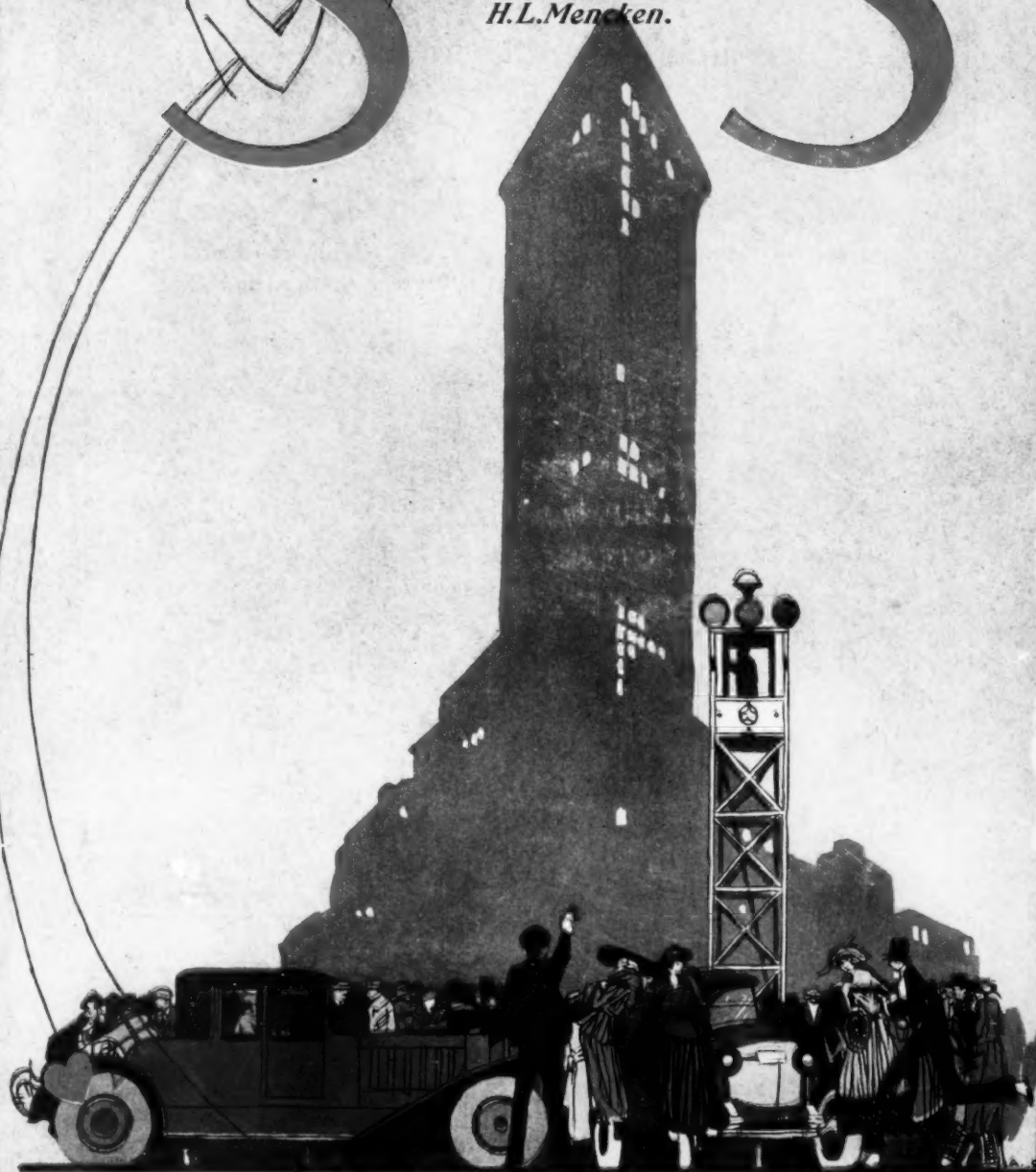


FEBRUARY, 1922

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# The SMART SET

*Edited by  
George Jean Nathan  
and  
H.L. Mencken.*



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## A Note from the Editors

A curious misconception of *The Smart Set* seems to persist in certain quarters. Not a few persons appear to be under the impression that the magazine is still much as it was in its early days—that is, a publication given over in considerable part to the fluffy and inconsequential in literature, comment and criticism. This impression, of course, is that of readers who have not actually looked into it during the last half dozen years.

Take a glance at the magazine as it exists today. In the matter of literature, its editors have introduced to the American public in the period named the majority of the younger native writers who have subsequently with their novels attracted the widest and most sober attention. In a number of instances, their novels have appeared in part in the magazine. Among these new writers are F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of "This Side of Paradise"; Harvey Fergusson, author of "The Blood of the Conquerors"; Ben Hecht, author of "Erik Dorn"; Sherwood Anderson, author of "The Triumph of the Egg"; Elisabeth Sanxay Holding, author of "Invincible Minnie"; Floyd Dell, author of "Moon-calf," and others.

The two young American poets at present most widely discussed, to wit, John McClure, author of "Airs and Ballads," and John V. A. Weaver, author of "In American," were first brought out by *The Smart Set*.

The foremost of the young American dramatists, Eugene G. O'Neill, was introduced to the public through these pages. *The Smart Set* also published the early work of Zoë Akins and Rita Wellman.

Among the English writers who have come into their own in the last few years, *The Smart Set* was instrumental in introducing Lord Dunsany, W. S. Maugham, W. L. George, James Joyce, Aldous Huxley, Stacy Aumonier, Harold Brighouse, John Galsworthy, Phyllis Bottome, and others.

The magazine is currently presenting the work of three young American writers whose celebrity is a matter of only a few years, to wit, Ruth Suckow, one of the most extraordinary short story writers that America has produced; Thyra Samter Winslow, the originator of the "Main Street" type of American fiction; and Stephen Ta Van, a writer of the utmost promise.

*The Smart Set* brought out part of "Jurgen," the masterpiece of James Branch Cabell, who received his first hearing in these pages. It has brought out Theodore Dreiser as a dramatist, and first printed the finest piece of writing in Willa Sibert Cather's "Youth and the Bright Medusa."

The Boston *Transcript's* annual survey of American magazines for last year placed *The Smart Set* at the top of the list in the number of distinguished stories published.



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**SMART SET**  
*The*  
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## Oh, You Who Said Farewell to Me!

*By A. Newberry Choyce*

**I**F this should come to you, take care!  
For a song is a proud and potent thing  
To harry your footsteps anywhere  
And trouble your breast in Spring.

Oh, you who said farewell to me!  
Count the birds that wing in the sky.  
Count the fishes that swim in the sea.  
And when shall the last one die?

For more than a million years from then  
When the moon is ash and the last gold star,  
My song shall ache in your heart again  
Wherever you are!



# A Dying Ember Flickers

*By Howard Weeks*

PAGET sat atop the bus basking deliciously in the brilliant autumn sunshine. The glittering shop windows that slipped past fascinated him and the constant, shifting procession of multicolored, glossy motors thrilled him mildly. In one great black car he saw a pale face like a flower and in a huge blue limousine he saw a face smiling, smiling in the contemplation of the thought that she was being observed and that her pulchritude was causing envy.

As he sat drinking in the warm, mellow sunshine and swaying slightly with the pleasant motion of the bus, Paget experienced a peculiar inward glow of satisfaction. He seemed to lose consciousness, to float on a sea of delicate sensation fabricated from the kaleidoscopic round of sparkling color and moving life that passed him. Swept away in a debacle of emotion that passed over him like cloud shadows over a meadow, powerful in outline, intangibly beautiful, he sat insensible of all happening, bathed in a sensuous titillation that dominated him, mind and body.

The bus rolled on. People came and went. To Paget they were no more than fantastic shadow shapes that seemed to glide, wraithily, round the polished edge of his benumbed sense.

Then slowly, sharply, as if a fine porcelain had cracked, there crept into his mind a thin filament of cognition dissipating the roseate calm of his inactivity.

He shook himself mentally, arousing himself from his lethargy as a ruffled sleeper unwillingly and futilely struggles against wakefulness. A single keen,

pleasant suffusion swayed him, brought him to a cognate realization. An odor, a delectable redolence, came to him clear and fresh.

It increased, swooning sweet. He recognized the scent of wistaria and with it, inextricably mingled, was that peculiar exhalation which comes only from a beautiful woman. Paget's nostrils filled and dilated. He inhaled deeply and his brain seemed to whirl. The blend of the smells of fur, lip salve, powder, fresh flowers. . . . A command to males. The essence of woman. And fused with it the muscadine fragrance of wistaria. . . .

His eyes opened. In front of him he saw the woman, seated, her back toward him. He looked at her carefully, fondly. Only a small brightly-colored hat and a gleaming, lissom ankle terminating in a tiny, rounded heel; the rest was gray fur. Fully awake and active, he gazed at her, gulping in the scent.

She got up. The heavy, delicious fragrance seemed to engulf him and to kindle within his breast the flaming longing for possession. He gripped the rail. His eyes closed.

The bus lumbered to a stop. She was gone.

He sat up straight. A cutting wind had sprung up and through widely separate gaps the buildings let the sun fall in flat bars across the street. Boys howled the evening editions and the brakes on the bus squeaked. The air was noticeably colder.

Paget turned up his coat collar and gave an involuntary shiver. He lighted a cigarette and wondered whether or not his wife would have anything he liked cooking for dinner.

# Toreador

[A Complete Novelette]

By Stephen Ta Van

## CHAPTER I

SO many leaves have fallen from the trees since Toreador's death—so much time has passed and so many emotions have cooled, ironically, with the lapse of it—that I suppose there may be a chance, now, to consider the young man fairly; if, indeed, it be possible in that way to consider any young man, or a person of any age or sex. Each of us, forming an opinion, is chained to an individual bias, hedged about by prejudices. To deny in one (or many) of us a proper ability to judge a fellow, is but restating negatively a truism.

Making due allowance for a man of Toreador's type is especially hard. The beautiful woman is to an extent *connue*; tradition has licensed her since the day when the Trojan elders, conferring on the city wall, excused Argive Helen. But the beautiful human male—. From Narcissus on, he has been the object of hatred and ridicule; and this, notwithstanding that males of other species are permitted, nay praised for, pulchritude.

Nor is the hatred or contempt confined to beautiful men in whom there is a hint of effeminacy. The type I mean is as masculine as the average yet repellent to men. You see an exponent of it on a swimming team, or in a group at a restaurant table, but there is an invisible line around him. More often, if in male company in a restaurant, he is with an older man, or a conspicuously weak or ugly one. And

again I say there is no taint of decadence. He is a clean sight: tall, or taller than most; small and sleek of head; well-kept; and almost invariably dark, with an olive skin. You cannot mistake him. The gaze of every woman in the room reverts to him again and again, regardless of mirrors. He is, without effort, a hypnotist, and it both flatters and bores him.

Think of the advantage—and the curse! Four out of five of the women he meets, given the opportunity, hurl themselves at him; and other men hate him for that. You cannot judge, on a basis of fairness, an opponent who has been enabled, by a freak of destiny, to roll over you without even the semblance of a struggle.

Then in Toreador's case there is added, to sway the judgment unreasonably in the opposite direction, his heroic exit. It is one of the melancholy facts that after some experience and observation of the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, one comes to regard reported heroism with the appraising eye. And in that War! A million gallant deeds were done and buried, untold, beneath the stupendous carnage-heap; at least a few inferior ones were saved and celebrated for causes not altogether altruistic.

Granting meed of praise and honor to the deserving, who were the heroes, where humanity by wholesale was engulfed in horror? A woman runs from a cockroach but faces childbirth bravely. A man who faints at the nick of a razor, realizes in battle that he must

kill or be killed, wrests the trench-knife from his enemy's hand, saves his own life and a comrade's, and receives the *croix de guerre*. Another, attempting a similar deed, fails and is trampled under. Well?

They say Toreador was shot down as he went up through woods at the head of his men. The troops behind him were strangers, not those who had been under him in camp. They had no motive—. But most of those camp-rumors are groundless. Let the manner of his death go as told. We know that prior to his American transfer he was with the French on the Chemin des Dames and for some days at Verdun. Jerry Vermilion, meeting and drinking with him on *permission* at Tours, got from him fragments of his experience. Any man who had been where he had been, and survived, had an essence of strength in his vitals.

He was up to his tricks at the time—a little cheaper than when we knew him. He showed Jerry the trinkets of French girls, but perhaps only after he was quite drunk. In general he was as before, inclined to be taciturn. His enemies used to say that his silence was stupid, but though he was ignorant along many lines, in others he was both shrewd and well-read. He was strong in French literature and unusually proficient in the Provençale; both preferences due, of course, to early education and travel. His summing-up of French military and political types of wartime, Jerry said, was a masterpiece. He had been driver for two generals of division.

The most individual of Toreador's reminiscences were carried out with him unrevealed. He babbled comparatively little of his affairs, for self-protection partly, no doubt, and partly from natural reticence; and what a horde of memories he must have had, stored up behind that narrow forehead! Brought up amid governesses and private tutors by a father who was like a valet, he had been exposed since early boyhood—in this place and that—to the advances of the women of all sorts and

classes whom his beauty attracted. As is common in such cases, the attraction was strongest for the more sophisticated, and the worst possible influences threatened to overwhelm him. He once told me that he could scarcely remember a period when he had not been obliged to fight his way through a crowd of women.

The very surplusage disgusted and hardened him. At fifteen or sixteen he was blasé, and much more interested in his game of tennis, learned on the Continent, than in the pestering females. His father, a widower, was of the weak and wishy-washy type which sometimes evinces unsuspected and commendable common-sense in superintending its offspring's physical education. Judson Vanderhuyl insisted on regular exercise for his son Arthur, and got him the best teachers in tennis, swimming and fencing. The boy learned to respect his body, and continued to care for it meticulously. He had a superb torso, and powerful legs that though graceful were a little too heavy for a runner. His attitude toward his body was almost Greek, appreciative but not unpleasantly self-conscious, and he had a clear idea of his athletic possibilities.

"My tennis is good," he said (he always spoke accurately), "perhaps excellent, but I sha'n't develop into a star, I don't like it enough. I can never run a quarter under fifty, and am too heavy for the half. Baseball I hate, comparatively. I'm going in for football."

You like him for that. Football was the hardest game open to him and the one in which his beauty was most likely to be marred. Some two-hundred pound tackle might conceive a notion to drive a set of cleats into his face as he lay on the ground, to see how he would take it. Evidently Arthur was not afraid of rough treatment.

He told me of his intention on our second or third meeting, when he was in his nineteenth year. I was running a tennis tournament for a club at a small New England shore resort. He and his father—after one came to know

them, always named the son first—were visiting at a neighboring village, and the father brought him over, as a chronic exhibitor and for some practice.

The tournament was short of entries, as usual, and I welcomed his, late though it was. To let him accustom himself to the courts, I offered to play him a set, not knowing him, and having no warning of his quality. He gave me a six-love beating without effort and I saw that barring the proverbial accident, he would win the singles hands down, against the competition in evidence.

He fulfilled the prophecy, and captured all feminine hearts as easily. He had an assured manner with females, even then, and as I have explained, was not "susceptible." His indifference, of course, helped his impression. So far as I could see, he took advantage of no conquest. In general, his looks entirely aside, he was reservedly charming. One could know him quickly in a superficial way, joke him, after a little, about the handicap in his favor.

"Beauty before Age," I said to him once, pushing him before me through a doorway; and he took it without embarrassment or pique.

Altogether we liked him much, made problematical dates with him for the winter, were loath to see him go, asked him to come again. I had taken rather a particular liking to him, possibly through being one of the ugly little men open to the fascination of his kind. The only thing I disliked actively about him was his resolution to play his football for a small freshwater college. I thought he should have had too much pride, and too much respect for his own capabilities, to take the job of a big fish in a small puddle.

## CHAPTER II

DURING the next four years, those of his college course, I saw Arthur only a few times, and then casually. He was the prominent man of his class at Enderlin and, on vacation, much too busy to honor our little tournaments.

On the football team he starred, gaining an individual reputation of the usual temporary note; in the newspapers, you covered Enderlin if you printed Vanderhuyl. Almost all that one heard of him was favorable. If a dissenting note made a trifling discord in the chorus of praise, it was proved to emanate from a defeated rival or some other owner of a grudge. In two words, Arthur had "made good."

I wondered, occasionally, how success had affected his unusual personality. Once I met him on the street in New Haven, with time for nothing more than a handshake; his smile was frank enough then. I saw half a game at Cambridge, in which he played and played well; Harvard stopped a run of his inside the twenty-yard line. I managed to congratulate him, and he was still more than civil. The third meeting was in New York, on a crowded evening at the Biltmore. He was with a party, and excusable for not catching my wave and call of greeting. I did not press the privilege.

It was deftly at tournament-time that he again invaded Buckwheat Beach, in August of the summer following his graduation. The adolescent Arthur would not have hit it so neatly; but I soon found that Arthur, grown, was not one to fumble opportunity, and especially the opportunity that was easy. His veiled eyes betrayed a calculating hint, despite their opaqueness. The young man was a concentration and development, it seemed to me, of only one side of the boy's possibilities.

Not that he was unpleasant. On the contrary, he was as assured, as charming, as before — more so, since added experience had made him more skilful.

Perhaps that was the trouble; his superabundant skill. He beat us too good-naturedly, too easily, and if not with condescension, at least under a suspicion of patronage. He had stiffened, was inclined to be cruel at bottom. It would have been indiscreet to joke him, in the later phase, on his good looks. And I did not like his manner toward the girls, though what

was insolence in the cronies whom he brought with him, seemed in him merely a mark of the superiority which his personality carried off.

Of the companions who followed from the neighboring beach to see him play, one, a hunchback, named Martyn, was much above the others intellectually. Since he did not play, I gave him occupation as umpire, and in return for that doubtful favor, got from him an interesting sidelight on his friend. He had the cynicism almost inseparable from his deformity, and I soon saw that he derived misanthropic amusement from observation of Arthur's success.

On the second day of the tournament we were waiting, he and I, by the umpire's chair of the Number Two court, for a mid-afternoon match to begin. The first matches of the second session had been completed, and the players had sought shade and cooling drinks on the veranda of the little clubhouse, where the elect of the settlement were beginning to gather for the day's social climax. For the moment, we were alone in the glare of the sun-baked courts. Suddenly Martyn emitted his cackling laugh, and half pointed.

"Thee!" he said. Incidentally, he lisped. "Toweador in hith element!"

I followed his indication of the clubhouse and saw Vanderhuyl the centre of a feminine group, of which the members were obviously performing for him, while he scarcely moved from his not-too-noticeably-overdone slant against a pillar.

"So you call him Toreador," I said. "How did he get that name?"

"What elth would you call him?" Martyn countered. "It jutht gwew. Theah he ith—Toweador, the Flower of Thpain."

Of course it was true. Put the red and yellow of a bull-fighter's alleged costume on Arthur, and he would have graced a stage ten times as effectively as any current Escamillo. But there was a deeper significance in Martyn's laughter than could have to do with

mere appearance, and I was curious enough to fish for it.

"Does he follow the regular toreador bent?" I asked flatly.

Martyn laughed again, not agreeably. "They fall for him in heaps." (I omit the lisp.)

"And he isn't exactly indifferent?" I persisted.

He lifted his thin arms in a grotesque, impatient shrug.

"For God's sake! He's young, and strong, and handsomer than a girl's dream of her lover. What would you expect him to do? Call for help?"

The cluster of fresh combatants was spreading out from the clubhouse, across the courts toward us, and Martyn turned away from me, to mount the umpire's chair. But thinking, evidently, that he had been needlessly bitter—he was a good sort, in his way—he turned back and said in an undertone:

"Don't make too much of what I said. The fellow isn't a hog, you know. He lets a good many of them go."

I had a reason for my question:

"Is there any particular way of telling which ones he doesn't intend to let go?"

The cynical impulse again came uppermost.

"Watch the gween hat," lisped Martyn, scrambling to his high seat with astonishing agility.

I laughed. The canvas hat, green for defence against the glare, was on Margery Wrayne's head, one of the least likely in that gathering, I thought, to be disturbed by a toreador. My suspicion had taken a different direction, toward a point where personal interest lodged.

I crossed the courts, checking off mentally the players and umpires and wishing that luck had vouchsafed me linesmen. An umpire was missing and I hurried toward the club. Hester Wrayne, Margery's stepdaughter, passed with the Hincks girls and their plain friend whose name no one could remember, and as she did so, turned and called urgently to Margery to hurry, that Court Four was waiting.

Margery and I met on the lawn, at



a little distance from the steps. She was not hurrying, but walking rather slowly, and her eyes had a fixed look, which I did not notice until after she had spoken. Almost in my ear, and under her breath yet striking a deep note of the voice which suggested—ludicrously, sometimes—a professional female baritone, she uttered a speech of the old, ten-twenty-thirty melodrama:

"God! how I want him!"

Thinking my sense of hearing in error, I stopped with my mouth open on some piece of banter half-produced. I had not been mistaken—though the tragedienne moved on without further evidence of her malady. The words were as plainly spoken, and apparently as sincere, as any I had heard.

By an ironic chance, the first eligible, unoccupied man on whom I laid eyes near the club-house door, was Theodore Wrayne, and I was not too startled to seize the opportunity.

"You're elected umpire on Number Three," I told him. "I don't know where Fitz has gone, and Heaven has sent you."

In his staccato manner, always a little overdone, he quoted at me from some minor dramatist, possibly "Sinjon" Rankin, as was his habit.

### CHAPTER III

THE Wraynes leased, from season to season, a small cottage close to the water, half-way down the settlement's line. They began coming to Buckwheat when the children, except Hester, were tiny, and had continued to come after the ghastly accident which killed both youngsters in one lancinating smash. The place was cheap and suited them, and Margery was not morbid—had, in fact, a kind of super-balance that had pulled her through. Moreover, Buckwheat was not associated with the children's actual death, which had occurred in the city.

"I don't know where we could find another beach as free and quiet, and as convenient to New Haven, for Ted's

sake," Margery had often boomed, in the mellow voice. "It's good for Hester, too, on her vacations. If I could have more babies, I'd start them somewhere else, but as I'm not likely to, what does it matter?"

This was of a piece with her usual frankness. She was cosmopolitan: European-born, of an English father and a Swiss or Alsatian mother. Educated spasmodically, mostly in England, she knew the France, Germany and Low Countries of a decade earlier, and still spoke French and German upon occasion. As a girl she had fallen in love with an English youth, who died of a fever without declaring himself. With characteristic directness she had questioned his sister, after the death, concerning his attitude toward her and, characteristically again, had been only half-convinced by the kind reply.

She had taken Wrayne at Ostend, where he was recuperating from a belated course of Teutonic study. He was an American widower a dozen years older than she, a dilettante of sorts, who had done some moderately successful minor teaching and a deal of unsuccessful writing in dramatic form. He was virtually through with literary creative effort; had passed into a critical semi-paralysis. Many subjects and formulæ interested him a little, for a time. He had a slender patrimony, dwindling despite one-sided miserliness; a daughter, and few relatives. A gentleman in manner and upbringing, though not quite gentle in instinct, he was not, on the whole, a hopelessly bad catch for a rather pretty, not very popular girl who had nothing.

Margery had thought herself partly in love with him, at marriage. She admired his mind and was not too finely drawn to meet his streak of animalism in kind. There was no opportunity, until later, for her to discover his weakness in loyalty and friendly affection. She bore him two children rather happily and achieved for Hester the peculiar love, sometimes fortunate, sometimes as unhappy as the corresponding hatred, of a woman in her posi-

tion for a girl in Hester's. She had never seen Hester before they moved, after the birth of the first baby, to America.

Wrayne, his funds inelastic, obtained a lectureship at Yale. His uneven culture was sufficient to give him a trifling prominence there, and his advent was luckily timed, in that it came when the flippant, modern type of instructor was in the ascendant. To turn a politely wicked epigram, to slip a conventionally daring opinion into the news occasionally, were tickets to attention. Wrayne worked fairly hard; studied for, and acquired, the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. His thesis was a bibliography of some variations of the Faust legend.

His wife fitted not too badly into the life of the younger University set. The ultra-conservatives — where all were conservative — thought her method of dressing the babies a little radical; the golf-and-bridge section found her a bit simple.

In truth she was unfortunate in the extent by which her sincerity surpassed theirs. In her was the germ of an honest curiosity about life, and this, developing, expressed itself in questions and investigations which seemed tactless from the Yale viewpoint. A girl of her generation, brought up in New Haven, would scarcely have interrogated the sister of a dead man with reference to the state of his affections.

Margery's curiosity increased after her reaction from the acuteness of the shock of the children's death. By then she had discovered how shaky a prop was Wrayne. Affectionate, she retained kindness for him, and his knowledge was enough wider than hers to hold her respect; but his antics of a stilted playboy, with one eye always on an audience, had earned her permanent moral contempt. She was naturally too clear-sighted to have failed to see, and too honest to ignore, his tuppenny turpitudes. Whether or not he was unfaithful to her technically, he loved to brandish platonic friendships, and maintained all the irritating by-play of

a carefully nursed intellectual superiority. Consequently tragedy threw Margery back upon her own resources, and she came up slowly, lonely and considerably puzzled by what seemed to her an unfairness in Destiny.

The problem which interested her most urgently was occupation. Wrayne spent much time at the Pot-Pourri Club — lunched and lounged there — and was usually intrigued by some literary or dramatic adventure, a collegiate publication or amateur play, necessitating evening absence. Her house required but a little time, and Hester, bookishly inclined, another fraction. To call and gossip and sew, or golf and gossip, in the manner of the Set, seemed to her comparatively futile. Her outlook of the time resembled that of a grown boy, or young man, testing the world to find out what it was all about; but her effort was complicated by her experience.

In the country, where I knew her, her existence was more at loose ends than it was in New Haven. The cottage was small, a mere box to straighten. Wrayne was absent much, picking up a few extra hundreds at summer school, and when he graced the Beach, passed most of his hours on other porches — notably on that of Kitty Froment, his Egeria of the story's summer. In fact his preoccupation with the lively Kitty threatened to give rise to one of the settlement's chronic scandals, a circumstance which did not add to his wife's comfort, though she felt it less than was supposed by some of the virtuous ladies who interested themselves in the alleged disgrace.

"I don't really mind it much," Margery told me. "I've seen him do the same thing so many times. It doesn't amount to anything, you know. She just stuffs his vanity."

"Of course," I said.

We were drinking ginger ale after tennis, a week before the tournament, and I was too sluggish for the advisable manoeuvre of turning the subject.

"Only, I wish he wouldn't insist on being such a rotten sport," she con-

tinued. "I like people who do and say the things they mean, don't you?"

I was forced to grin at that. A few days before, no earlier, Margery had brought down her tennis racket on my head, with characteristic force and frankness, because in a moment of equal sincerity I had told her that her wrangling about points was making her game unsporting.

"Kitty's harmless," I said, knowing well that to be dangerous was within Kitty's possibilities. "I think you're perfectly right to ignore it and let it wear itself out."

"I don't know," she said, musing, and evidently on the brink of one of her verbal indiscretions. "She just might happen to be troublesome, by accident or a combination of circumstances. . . . D'you remember that afternoon last summer when you and I went up to Craig's Mill for water-lilies and got marooned, away up at the end of the pond, in the thunderstorm? The dark barn, with the thunder crashing and the rain falling in torrents on the crazy roof, got on my nerves in that stifling air. I might have done almost anything."

"But you stayed sane," I said. "Draw a moral from that, for the other case. And remember that Kitty's too canny for much excitement."

She looked at me sharply, in her odd, disconcerting way, very blonde, and more feminine than usual.

"Are you daring to pity me?"

"Heaven forbid! My dear, I think these things are on the knees of the elder gods, to whom neither pity nor fear imports."

"I suppose you mean that we should not feel fear or pity?"

"Pity, yes; fear, no. But if you count on pity from others, you will learn fear."

"Perhaps you're right. At any rate, I'm not afraid."

I did not think she was afraid, beyond the instinctive dread of misfortune, which all combat who are not fanatics or morons. Moreover, I was confident of her personal hardihood,

even with the purpose dim. Whatever her confessions, one had always to remember that her insistent honesty made her prone to injustice to herself, and that therefore her pessimism should be discounted.

But remembrance of that conversation, coupled with Martyn's crazy hint, made me think more than twice of her melodramatic speech of the tennis court, after the event. Was it a mere fantastic coincidence, fitting an assumption totally unrelated to it? Or was the hunchback truly a prophet? Absurd, the last possibility; a hundred to one chance. I dismissed the matter, and let my thoughts turn to my own affairs, which were in a kind of air-hole.

#### CHAPTER IV

I was in process of disposing, not very rapidly, of my holdings at Buckwheat Beach. I owned several cottages, all rented, and a small store, run by a lessee, and wished to be rid of them definitely before moving to other fields. There was also the remnant of an affair of the emotions, which was proving somewhat troublesome. Neither of these entanglements was of importance in the events to be recorded; I mention them only to explain my presence, alone, and my uneasiness, that summer at the Beach.

I occupied by night a two-room shack, with a terrier for house-company—the animal, a dictatorial Scottie hight MacDougall, declining to bunk in the shed with my Ford, and reposing, when he slept, on a chosen rug at my bed-foot. He had elected himself the community's guardian, and often insisted on prowling, with his master for escort, in the sma' hours. I humored him, from the restlessness of insomnia, and thus it happened that on the second night following the incident recounted, I was out with him on the road running behind the row of cottages.

The day had been one of rain, postponing the tournament, but the sky had partly cleared, so that the August moon, nearly full, shone intermittently, pro-

ducing at intervals in the thick grove that edged the shore, surrounding the houses, the heavy shadows and weird lighting of its greenish glow among woods. MacDougall, ridiculously aquiver with the easy excitement of his kind, slanted here and there on forays silently, and dodged back occasionally to make sure that I was following, appreciative of his importance. After midnight, life had subsided; the colony was a peaceful one, of professional men, mostly, and their conventional families. High up in the tower of the Hincks' cottage—an excrescence of seaside architecture—a light showed; evidence, doubtless, of the Professor, unable to tear himself from his annotation of Flaccus. All other windows were dark, save for the deceptive glint of moonlight on them.

We had covered nearly half the beat, when the dog, a short distance ahead and between the road and cottages, emitted his sharp bark which clearly celebrated, "Got you!" A human curse followed, and a dark mass dimly discernible under the reappearing moon, separated into two figures, of which one slid quickly back into the shelter of the nearest cottage, while the other, showing white trousers, kept off the circling Scott.

"He won't bite!" I called in the supposedly reassuring tone common to dog-owners on such occasions, and as I advanced I argued with MacDougall, who droned off into insulted whines.

It was Toreador in the white trousers, and he was badly out of temper.

"What's the idea, coming along disturbing the peace with that black nothing-at-all?" he demanded. "I had a good mind to kill him. I'm not sure he hasn't taken a chunk out of my ankle."

"He'd probably have taken two if you'd kicked him," I said. "He has no sense of proportion, on account of his Celtic temperament. And if it comes to that, what are you doing here, at this hour of the morning?"

"That's my business," he growled.

"Ah, sits the wind in that quarter?

No offense, Arthur, no offense."

"None taken," he said sullenly, brushing at the trousers with his hand.

We stood awkwardly silent for a moment.

"I had insomnia tonight and took a walk to get rid of it," he offered. "Those rooms at the inn are stuffy. Stopped here to light the pipe."

A tart retort leaped to my lips, but why release it? Why, in fact, say anything? The cottage closest to us, into which the woman had escaped, was the Wraynes', and I knew from bridge gossip that afternoon that Wrayne and Hester had gone to New Haven to stay over the night. The thing was plain enough to be commonplace; but an impulse of disgust shook me, unreasonably.

"You were right, your pipe is your own business," I snapped. "Come on, Mac."

"You make me sick," he called after me.

By no means loath to have the last word, I called back in the idiom:

"You have nothing on me in that."

Somewhat I repented my churlishness the next day.

After all, save for that one flash by the moonlight, 'twas but a young man walking out after midnight, and who was I to cast a stone? Also I was certain that whatever might be the exact nature of Ted Wrayne's philanderings, he had given his wife excuse and to spare for any amusement she cared to take. Nine hundred and ninety women out of a thousand would not have endured his divagations, whether venial or not, half so long. Nevertheless my disgust continued; and it is true that the painting which one has become accustomed to regard with complacency in its frame may lose its poetry when dismantled, though one has always known that the back was dirty canvas.

I was in fact angry at Arthur Vanderhuyl for using edged tools where we fenced with wooden swords. Though Buckwheat had its scandals—what summer resort has not? — they had been kept, almost entirely, matters of talk.

Many of the cottagers were by habit utterly innocuous, prim naturally to the nth degree, and the white blackbirds, or black doves, had with few exceptions been careful in concealment. Even Madge Wadleigh, the actress, and Kitty Froment herself—

But concerning Kitty I must elaborate, since her dinner, of the evening of the tournament finals, precipitated or helped to precipitate the *dénouement*.

Mrs. Froment was, chiefly by courtesy, a member of the clique of Southwesterners, who, when the heat of advancing summer became severe in their sandy habitat, migrated eastward and spent the season at Buckwheat Beach. The pioneer couple had brought others, until the average New England summer welcomed half a dozen families of charming people: women of refinement and social validity, visited occasionally by banker or attorney husbands.

Little Kitty was Southern-born, and told affecting stories of her life with sisters and brothers on the old estate, and of her father, the old Colonel—how she, as the youngest, always brought to him his evening toddy. Her Southwestern friends heard her amiably, and spoke of her as a dear little mother; she had indeed a pretty and elaborately mannered small daughter. But the emphasized cordiality was on Kitty's side, and one proud old lady, at least, magnificent in purple silk and old diamonds, and the widow of a Confederate general, let it be known that she did not care to sit at bridge with Mrs. Froment.

André Froment was announced to be selling elevator cables in the United States for a French firm. A handsome, middle-aged young man, he was trim, but tired-looking in the evening; and usually he was absent on his sales-trips. Obviously, the cables were exacting. Kitty spoke often of him, recounting cozy domestic incident and legend, but when he visited the Beach, husband and wife pursued their activities apart. André, when not too worn by Fate's vicissitudes, showed toreadorish qual-

ities, and the inference was that his elements and Kitty's similar rather than complementary, fused but tamely, for permanence.

Certainly they went their ways without much mutual interference, combining only against a common enemy. Kitty had habitually a tame cat, a rôle for which she chose alternately, that summer, Ted Wrayne and a college boy.

Her operations were harmless enough, on the surface; she believed in variety's safety. Unlike the old-line gossips, I was convinced that she amused herself with Wrayne, keeping him for a stalking-horse, with the privilege reserved of using him directly if he proved worth while. Opportunities were not too many or various at Buckwheat, and perhaps he saved some afternoons and evenings from boredom. With Kitty, there was always danger in the background, but it seemed to me that Ted himself must bore excruciatingly after a little, and I reckoned that so brisk a soul as Kitty's would dispense with his attendance before the season's end.

Such a dismissal was apparently presaged by her fulsome advertisement of Mr. James Brock, the guest in whose honor she planned the dinner for the Wednesday of the week to which, fortuitously, the tournament finals had been postponed by rain.

## CHAPTER V

THE men's singles were played on Wednesday, and Arthur Vanderhuyt won them as easily as he had won the corresponding event five years before. Our competition did not vary much, and Arthur's game, though, true to his prediction, it had not become an expert's, had developed sufficiently to take into camp, in straight sets alike, the local champion and a trumpeted visitor who stood forty-fifth or fifty-seventh in the national ranking. In short, the Buckwheat winner was a competent cup-hunter on the small-time circuit. Having an interval to fill, he had entered our tournament, more



definitely than in the former year, for that purpose.

He was bidden to the dinner, or rather included in the invitation extended to the Wraynes, which afforded the prospective hostess an opportunity for at least three mildly malicious flourishes. Of course she padded her main thrust by asking him ostensibly for Hester. For the collegian of Kitty's suite, the elder Hincks damsel was asked; since in view of the limited facilities for entertainment, you might pluck from families at Buckwheat, if you were careful. Two Southwestern couples came, almost inevitably but a trifle watchfully; and I offered my arm without marked exhilaration to the lady with whom I was saying adieu, and who had been asked as a tribute to me, or vice versa. The hostess and the guest of honor completed the table, André being out with his cables.

Not only did I commence that dinner with a reverse urge by reason of my partner; I was worn from passing through, in the morning, a scene which left me with a feeling comparable to that of the lawyer whose client confesses guilt to him, flatly and cheerfully—make the best of it! The respected pillar of the Law, in such circumstances, feels that an unreasonable burden has been placed on him; the client, if guilty, should at least have phrased the admission in language circuitous and dignified, not come out plop! with it. My reaction was similar, and accompanied by a kind of vicarious responsibility.

Going early to the club to inspect the courts for the finals, I heard a strumming on the piano in the house, the premises being otherwise deserted, except by the groundkeeper.

Having given that craftsman his daily wiggling and instructions, I strolled in to see who was playing at such an hour, and found Margery Wrayne.

"A dillar, a dollar," I chirruped. "You are late for yesterday, but soon for today."

She whirled on the stool to face me.

"I'm going to meet Arthur, up the road, at ten."

The clock, that Mrs. Humphrey Huntingdon had given to the club to be rid of it, ticked like a hammer on the pause.

"Like a serving-wench," I said. "Moll Plunkett, hunting a knave."

The clear complexion flushed to her blonde hair, but she did not flinch.

"You are like Ted," she said. "You have played with so many emotions—rocked them and prodded them to see how they worked—that you can't even recognize a real one when you see it. I love him. Nothing else matters to me."

"Well?"

"I'm not under obligation to anyone," she went on. "I've earned my keep, and Ted killed any real love I had for him, bit by bit, long ago. My babies are dead. There's Hester, I'm sorry about Hester; but I'm not responsible for her, she'll have to look out for herself. You say each man, within reasonable limits, must live his own life. Is it different for a woman? I've given and given, and asked little in return. There was not much in sight that I wanted. But now there is something and I'm going to take it. What do you say to that?"

Obviously it was a rhetorical question, so far as expectation of an answer was concerned. But she did not speak dramatically or show strain, or stress of writhing hands. Her queerly deep voice was steady enough; she even struck a note or two on the piano behind her, with her fingers stretched to the treble and bass.

"You thought, didn't you, when you saw us the other night, that it was just a common, passing intrigue? It isn't, and I don't care who knows. I don't intend to advertise it until I leave—then I can't help it—but I'm not in the least ashamed. I love him."

Until she went away! She was believing that the fellow would elope with her; she, a woman old enough to have seen disaster dog romantic folly countless times. Completely floored, I



stared at her, then managed to pull myself together.

"You've pulled this thing on me brutally enough," I began. "You have no right to be offended if I'm brutal with you."

"I'm not offended — scarcely even interested. I've told you why you can't understand. The emotion is entirely out of your class."

"Very well. But remember, in your folly, that this man is a chronic woman-hunter, almost a professional. He cares nothing for you, will risk nothing. All he wants is a common intrigue as you call it. You give yourself for nothing."

At that, she struck rather magnificently.

"I don't believe you! And if you were right, what difference would it make? What is important is not whether he cares for me, but that I do care for him. I would bear his child in poverty, go on the streets for him! You don't know anything about that kind of love, do you, experimenter?"

You may believe that as umpire for the finals, I kept a bad score, and can understand why I was doubly nervous at dinner. Save for a stiff drink beforehand and two galloping cocktails at Kitty's, I should have floundered. Margery was not visibly nervous, at the beginning, although Vanderhuyl was in black humor despite his victory, and showed it until the cocktails produced his share of their mellowing influence.

The dinner passed off fairly well, with the conversation fed up skilfully by the hostess to the lion of the occasion, a giant of forty or forty-two, whose line, if one judged by his discourse, was Travel through Our Country and its Insular Addenda. He had visited Alaska, Hawaii and the Philippines and told stories of each, with a showing of massive white teeth (which I suspected of being porcelain) and in an interminable monotone.

There was about the man a tantalizing suggestion of someone seen before. I could not trace it, and at last, want-

ing to see his eyes, and rendered desperate by the Kanakas, among whose ancient tribal ceremonies we were being entertained, I asked him: What of the Marquesas? He seemed, I observed, to be the only modern traveler who was not brimming with reminiscences of them.

He looked at me with heavy, pouched eyes of repellent china blue, and again the suggestion hectored me. Either suspicion was mutual or I disconcerted him; for he closed like a clam and I drew from the hostess a bitter glare, reinforced by a verbal stab when the men, on formal 'havior, were leaving to smoke, and I passed her chair.

"He looked tough enough to stand it," I whispered, back. "Who is he, anyway?"

Kitty assumed her aristocratic manner.

"There's no better blood in the country," she told me, "than flows in the veins of James St. Stanislaus Brock."

The grandiloquence of the language was slightly dulled by necessity for communicating in the low voice, but I was duly impressed, and continued to watch James St. Stanislaus carefully at intervals.

We sat down to bridge; that is, twelve of us made up three tables. When heads were counted, it was found, somewhat to the group's surprise, that Hester Wrayne and Arthur Vanderhuyl were missing.

Kitty, much amused, purred and hinted guardedly, but Margery was not disturbed. I do not suppose that at the moment it occurred to her to consider her stepdaughter, a veritable babe in social matters, as a possible rival. She probably thought, either that Arthur was absenting himself to pique her after a disagreement, or endeavoring tactfully to placate her by showing attention to the rather gauche girl.

She had begun, however, to look very tired. Scorning cosmetics, she put her clear and delicate, fair coloring at the mercy of weariness and showed her age, in contrast to the petite hostess, who applied her paint with a trowel.

We played faithfully, fortified by cordials. In the middle of the third shift of partners, the truants appeared, Arthur bland, the girl glowing. She really was not bad-looking, with her glasses off. Built high like her father, she had smooth olive skin and a gangling grace like a tall filly.

Prior to the couple's return, I had solved my riddle with regard to Brock; it had been his raven locks that puzzled me. Something in the change of lights, from table to table, showed him at a different angle and gave me half a clue, and the accident of a broken left thumbnail completed the identification.

I had clipped off the marred nail to a point. It was exposed prominently as I dealt with the clumsiness of a left-handed dealer, and I noticed that the gaze of the guest of honor followed it. The explanation flashed on me at my second deal; with dyed hair, he was "Milwaukee Whitey," the gambler, well known in legislative periods in the Middle West, a dozen years before.

In those days, when gamblers and prostitutes gathered like buzzards at state capitals to strip or cozen the rural representatives, the so-called thumbnail cheating at cards, or the tradition of it, was in vogue. The crook cut his thumbnail to a point, and with it made on the cards of the fresh pack indentations which a confederate could decipher and interpret. Ancient habit had overcome Whitey on observation of my pointed nail; not suspecting the presence of an antiquarian, he had allowed himself to stare at it for old times' sake.

What was he doing there, in respectable disguise? It was like a movie of crime and detection: the villyun, the vamp, the virtuous and innocent company; not forgetting the wild and woolly cocktails. Worried by more pressing matters—my own affair was being held to my attention and Margery's remained in my mind—I had no active curiosity to crack the problem.

I did not, however, resist the temptation to let Whitey learn that I had plumbed his mufti. "James St. Stanis-

laus Brock, of the Country's premier blood!" It was too good to pass.

Without betraying my connection, which was trivial, or marking the hit for others to notice, I said enough to set Whitey guessing. He was not dull.

The china-blue eyes, alert between their heavy lids, told me that he had caught my hint and was scenting danger. He shook hands with me impressively at the evening's close, and I wondered only whether he would approach me personally, or delegate the investigation to the charming Kitty. Perhaps a great deal of news concerning elevator cables, and kindred industrial activity, might be disclosed.

## CHAPTER VI

IN the event, I met the pair halfway, instead of waiting indifferently for them to come to me. Need was the reason and Arthur Vanderhuyl the cause. The reader may scoff at the speed of developments, but I shall only point again to the young man's type and its capabilities. The fact is that within a week he had hypnotized Hester Wrayne and put Margery in hell. At his specialty, he was a rapid workman.

You may say that someone, or several, should have put an early stop to the activity of the wolf. But remember the character of the sheep-fold, and also, the widespread hesitancy to interfere in such a case. We had no organized machinery against invasion of that class, and few men individually care to create a kind of diversion which has resulted, from time immemorial, in as much damage to referee as to combatants. There may even be a rudimentary sex-communism among males, to the degree that while the normally law-abiding man resents personally his marauding fellow, he has a sense of recognition of the logic, granted the illogical cosmic premises, of the other's malevolent existence.

Frankly, Vanderhuyl could have thrashed any other man at Buckwheat, from a physical standpoint, to a formless pulp. Wrayne, the man most

directly concerned, would have stood no chance with him, supposing that Wrayne were a fighter, and that the speed of the campaign and his own self-absorption and frequent absence from the battle-front had not left him without definite knowledge of his enemy or the loss. Actually, none of us expected anything from him. He was hopelessly a talker, and it is doubtful whether, if a clash had come, some would not have grinned at his discomfiture.

A talk, or rather interview, with Margery, backed by a chance sight, while canoeing, of Arthur at his work with Hester, gave the immediate impetus to my opening of negotiation with the country's best blood, through Kitty Froment.

As may be guessed, Margery did not say much. If she had not been herself, she would have said nothing; but if she had been another, she would not have spoken before.

I met her walking from the post office late in the evening, and she patted MacDougall, who liked her, Scotchly.

"No doubt you think I'm a fool," she boomed in her abrupt way.

"I should be more stupid than I am if I said so. You are the only one who knows what you've got out of it."

"Plenty," she said with a deep breath. "No, I am sorry, but I don't regret."

She stooped again to pat the dog, and looked up with an odd slant, at which her face resembled an old woman's.

"If you could get him away," she said, "before he does any more harm to Hester. I don't see how you could manage it, but you don't know what he's capable of. I do."

She clasped her hands, then, and twisted them. She was not beyond human evidence of woe.

I made an opportunity to see Kitty alone, on the beach, after the morning swim the next day, and came to the point quickly.

"I want you to do me a favor."

"Why, particularly, should I favor you?" she retorted, measuring me with her brilliant, gray-and-yellow eyes.

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"You haven't been over-friendly to me."

"I sha'n't fence with you," I said. "I'm not clever enough. But I'll make a plain trade."

She ran dry sand between her fingers. The hand was pretty, one could not help noticing; capable, with long fingers, not too dainty, in contrast to the owner's twittering surface-activities.

"Well, what then? What do you offer me?"

"Nothing but a clear field. I know a good deal about your blooded friend's early antics and could find out his current ones. If silence is any object to him, I'll exchange it for a little service from you."

She stopped coquetting with the sand, and showed me her hard, natural, practical self. Lines formed visibly in her face; the veneer, which she used even when in a bathing suit, stood off from her skin. Grotesquely, I detected what I had not suspected before: that she wore a "transformation."

"I assume you don't want the usual service that a man demands. What is it that you do want?"

"Merely a little information that I think you can easily get for me."

"You threaten me boldly," she said. "I'm not sure that I care to deal with you."

"Make up your mind. I have a wire ready to send to Chicago."

It was second-act stuff, but did its work. She hesitated only a moment.

"By some unlucky chance, you've caught me when I'll pay for peace," she said. "I thought you a dub, but you've come at me in such a workmanlike way that I'll risk your meaning what you say. Exactly what is the information you want me to get?"

"Something on Arthur Vanderhuyl."

"Your own quarrel? I hadn't thought he was butting in on you. Unless—"

"No," I said, "altruistic—and my natural spleen. I hate to see him get away with such raw stuff."

"Oh," she shrugged. "Well, I said I thought you a dub. Meddling is poi-

son. However, I'll help you if I can. Strange to say, I dislike him, too. Probably I'm the only good-looking woman at the Beach who does—except those whom he has ignored, and they don't really hate him. I've had too much experience with his sort. They're effective until you know their little bag of tricks, and then—like fashionable doctors and criminal lawyers and other high and classified grafters—they're as simple as a trick puzzle, solved. One comes to despise them—phew! . . . Have you any suggestions?"

"His friends come over to play tennis. You probably know how to handle them."

"Good." She sprang up briskly, shaking the sand from her perfectly dry costume. "If they come this afternoon, I'll get one. It's a game I play well, and, thank God, there's plenty of Bourbon and ice and ginger ale. Give me a call after eleven tonight, if there's a lamp with a red shade in the north window of the east alcove. Come around by the beach and up these bath-house stairs. I'll see that Brock is out of the way." She laughed. "He wanted to go hunting for you with a blackjack."

I watched her run up the bath-house stairs, transformed again from the middle-aged battle-axe of whom I had caught a glimpse, to the energetic little operator of her everyday wiles. . . . By the new vision, it was almost possible to like her.

She was on hand at the club in the afternoon, bewilderingly attired, especially as to shoe-buckles; she had an ankle and a leg, and scorned the clumsy canvas gear of the athletic lassies. The tennis players appeared, were captured after play, and disappeared in Kitty's wake. I wondered how she would separate them for pumping, but I need not have given the matter a thought, for the red lamp showed duly in the alcove-window when I investigated at a quarter after eleven.

"I'm thankful you haven't brought that canine shadow of yours," Kitty whispered, meeting me on the veranda

as I tiptoed from the stairs. "Dogs give me the shudders. Come inside, I have your dope for you. Attend, while I recite."

She was quite triumphant, evidently from a sporting enjoyment of success in the game, irrespective of its nature or significance, which she had almost forgotten temporarily. It was a tiny brain, hers, moving fast.

"I tried the hunchback first," she began. "Will you have a drink? No? Martyn, I think's his name. Often you can flatter them easily, but he was too sharp. He cocked those bitter eyes at me and lisped his way off. I think he would have warned the other—I had cut two out of the herd for intensive treatment—but I gave him short shrift. Fancy the nerve, to try to balk me! The other was fertile enough for a harvest, after two highballs."

She laughed reminiscently, gaily and without malice.

Then her mood hardened; she leaned back, shaking the ice in her glass, and spoke more slowly, somewhat as a sybil.

"Your friend is in financial trouble, like a good many of us. He has spent most of the money his father left him. He likes expensive clothes and food, and is a fool at the racetrack, though he plays poker well. Good at your own game, weak at another's, you know. Even Whitey himself. . . . Well, your friend learned early in his college course that he could get money from women. He became careless and got close to the ragged edge several times—so close, at last, that it scared him. He decided to play a safe game and took steps to that end. Don't get impatient, I'm coming to the point. Hand me the cigarettes. . . ."

"In vacation after junior year he went to visit in Wisconsin, with the son of one of the beer-dukes—not any big German name that you know in the East, but one of the powerful ones locally."

"I know," I said.

"Oh, yes. I was forgetting. You know that district, of course. The duke had a summer place at some lake resort, Oconomowoc, I think, and there our

hero scraped acquaintance with the daughter of a Minnesota dry-goods king, head of a house as old as any they have out there, and higher than the beer man in the merchant peerage. I made sure of the name—here it is on a card—and you can look it up in Dun's if there's such a thing in the neighborhood.

"Young Arthur looked it up in Dun's, or the equivalent, and decided that the girl was his elected refuge and the sun, moon and stars of his desire. He shook his pals of the malt-and-hops set, and made his race on a reform platform, with citizens' league trimmings so far as he could raise them. His football reputation helped a lot. The king was a nut on sports, and suspicious though he was, he had to admire Arthur's kind of halfback. Of course the girl fell hard. It makes me ashamed for the sex to think of the easy hunting that trickster has had.

"The upshot was that the old man put him on probation. If he behaves himself and starts prettily in business, he can have Miss Barrow, of Barrow, etc. If he slips—and the king is strict—he'll have to give up and hunt another heiress, or take the chance of the king's relenting after an elopement, which he's not likely to do. Prince Charming made up his mind to go under the yoke, until he can get his hands on the money, and is having his last little fling, far away in this backwater, here.

"That's my story. Have I done my work well?"

"Hearty congratulations. You certainly emptied your informant."

"And filled him. Oh, it's easy to make them talk, and he wasn't unwilling. None of them likes Vanderhuyl much; they follow him to watch, and bask in the reflected glory. I think the hunchback pinched more on his own account, because he sensed my game, than on Arthur's. And now, since I've kept my word, what about your part of the deal?"

"I was charmed to meet your friend Mr. Brock, and regret that previous engagements will prevent me from seeing

much of him. Give him my best wishes."

She laughed.

"I will. Come and see me some time when you're lonely. I don't bear malice for a square hold-up, and I'll talk English to you again, not bluff."

Once more, this time as I left her, I got the impression of age. It was not from her face, for she was but a silhouette against the reddish light. Perhaps it was the realization of her situation, which had laid her open to such an assault as mine, and trained her to meet it matter-of-factly, almost in a spirit of comradeship, grateful because I had been square about it. She had not much that was pleasant ahead of her, I forecasted; presumably the elevator cables, and Brock, pointed to paths dreary if not disastrous. The thought of the toupee did not strike me so humorously as it had before.

I suppose my feeling was sufficiently sincere to have prevented me from chortling smugly, if by magical clairvoyance I could have foreseen the concrete fact, that the French would shoot André Froment for a traitor, in their coldly efficient fashion, in 1916.

Of Kitty, after that summer, I never heard directly again.

## CHAPTER VII

As I headed homeward, I had no hope of seeing Vanderhuyl that night, but when I neared the inn, light was showing in a second-story window, easily pierced by a low hail, and my quarry, still dressed, was visible within. Delay was of no advantage. I called to him without hesitation.

"What do you want?" he demanded sourly.

"Come down. I want to talk to you."

"What about?"

"Matters pertaining to the good of the lodge."

He swore at me under his breath.

"No fooling," he said then. "I'm tired; I want to go to bed."

"No fooling," I agreed.

He came out after a few moments, and we walked slowly down the road.



"You know, I took quite a fancy to you when you came down here as a kid and beat us," I began. "I like your looks still, but not your *morals*. Now, you've had a happy vacation—caused several hearts to titillate, and put a deep dent in at least one. You can stand a little plain talking. I'm going to give it to you."

"Go ahead," he said, narrowing his eyes. "Not so much introduction. You're too damned literary."

"Right. There's one of your qualities that I do like, namely, that you're a cold, hard-boiled proposition. That kind of person can see sense. Arthur, I'm here to give you twenty-four hours' notice."

The stare between the narrowed lids leaped at me.

"What the hell do you mean?"

"Buy your ticket tomorrow; and we don't care where you go."

"You shrimp!" he said. "Two or three times I've had the hunch to put my thumb on you and blot you out, and I'll do it if you interfere with me."

"Oh, no you won't, Arthur," said I, "and for just one reason: you can't afford to have any sort of an open row now."

"Why should I take orders from a runty country cottage-juggler?"

"I'm not a cottage-juggler to you. I'm the boy who knows enough about you to cook your goose with the senior partner of Barrow, Son & Nephew, away, 'way out in what used to be Swedish America."

"Ah!" he said.

The dramatic seconds passed, then time ceased to be dramatic. Arthur the adventurer became strictly Vanderhuyt the business man, much as Kitty Froment, the vampire, had become the business woman.

"I can't get ready as soon as that," he said. "I don't want to seem to go too abruptly. I was going away in ten days or so."

"I can't help it," I said, resisting the impulse to sneer. "I've put my hand to this now, and feel responsible. If I let you last longer, you might vamp

someone else, or—God knows—find some way of getting around me. I give you credit for ingenuity. I've come out on top in one showdown today; it will be a novelty if I can repeat. I'm taking no chances."

"I'll admit you have me cold," he said after a few steps, and consideration. "I want to keep my bacon, and I'll go. But you're doing a foolish thing in shaking me out without warning. I could smooth things down, with a few days' grace."

"Yes, or make them a lot worse. I'll take the responsibility."

"You don't know what may happen," he persisted, almost mildly. "Pardon me, I don't want to ruffle you; I'm laying down my hand and there's no use howling; but a man of your sort don't quite get the effect of one of mine."

"I get your effect, all right," I said. "Are you trying to scare me?"

"No, no, I don't want to scare you; I don't want anything to happen to you; I only wish you were dead. But that's not important. See here: whatever I've done, and no matter what you think of me, we both want the same thing now, to avoid a row, don't we?"

"Surely."

"Then let me stay a couple of days. There's someone I can do some talking to—lie my head off, if you like it better that way—and prevent a smash that would be bad for me if it happened, and would make you jump out of your little shoes. I'm in pretty deep, deeper probably than you guess, with all your funny fishing."

I thought it over. Everything I had learned was in favor of cutting the knots, as against the attempt at untying that he urged. Nothing but danger, that I could see, would be gained by postponing the departure; and I could not trust him. In his suggestion of pyrotechnics, I had no faith. The participants were not of that nature.

"If I let you go, you'll only put me off," I said, "and it will all be to do over again. What train will you take?"

He threw up his hands, in both senses.

"As well the early one, so long as



I'm going. I don't want to be questioned. I can pack tonight, and leave some of my things to be sent later."

"I shall be on hand to see you off."

## CHAPTER VIII

THE morning was a beautiful one, clear and windless, with just a premonitory hint of Autumn in the early air. The bay in front was like the proverbial glass, the trees of the grove stood motionless, their leaves sharply defined and fresh after the night. On the meadows behind, there was still dew.

I hurried up the line, and managed, unobserved, to thrust a note for Margery Wrayne beneath her cottage door. The act was a kind of instinctive face-saving, since the train would go, in all probability, before she could even read the note, and I could see no use in a sight of Vanderhuyl for her, in any case.

I met the young man walking, light suitcase in hand.

"*Me voici*," he said. "I trust you find me on time."

His attitude did not seem militant, but rather philosophic, and he was inclined to talk peaceably, in snatches, as we walked toward the station, which was a short quarter-mile to the north, across the meadows. He still protested that I was unwise in forcing him to leave abruptly, but his resistance had ceased to be actively argumentative. Chiefly he was ironic; two or three times he spoke of himself, in an impersonal vein, rather amazingly, as for example:

"Take my kind as a disease, old helion; a malady existent in the world, like snakes, which though poisonous have their beauty, and are more useful than they're made out to be, if you don't step on 'em. Nature forces us to proceed in spite of certain limitations, as it forces snakes to crawl on their bellies. You can't blame a snake for striking when you corner it. And think how lissome are its coils, and how easily it strikes!"

"I blame it for driving me to corner

it," I said, "and step on its head when I can."

"Ah, your problems are simple, you are not muddled by the basic doubts. Gallant little knight! Well, perhaps I shall become like you, a worthy, smugly demos—and self-adoring member of the herd, if I pull off this marriage. Money soothes a multitude of ills, quiets many a wandering impulse. I may stay put. Otherwise—if I lose this harbor—well, draw your own conclusions, little wise-acre. I shall make sundry commotions along the primrose path as I slip down, I'll warrant ye."

We reached the station with more than a half-hour to spare; the time was a little after six, and the first train was not due to pass until a quarter to seven. We strolled on the platform, smoking cigarettes. The station was still closed.

At 6:15 the red-haired station agent appeared, yawning, and opened the doors. He rolled out the truck, lifted a creaking window, coughed and swore, rattled his bunch of keys. When the clatter of the ticket machine's slatted cover, rolled back, indicated readiness for trade, Toreador excused himself to buy a ticket, and went into the building. I continued to pace the platform, too dull and nervous to think of anything save the wish that the train would come.

No mystic prescience warned me of disaster. I had made the turn at the platform's end and was starting slowly back, when Vanderhuyl burst from the station doorway and came toward me on the run. Even under the shock, he maintained a part of his remarkable composure and was coherent when we met.

"A shot!" he exclaimed. "A shot over the 'phone! I called her up to break the shock if I could. We talked a moment and then a shot banged over the wire in my ear."

The instant he said "'phone" I cursed my carelessness in not remembering the station booth.

"Called who, man?" I shook him. "Whom did you call, over the 'phone? Margery?"

"Margery nothing! It was Hester."  
Hester!

I stared a moment, then started to speak; but he turned and headed, running, toward the beach.

We left the agent, agape, in his doorway, and ran up the road, Arthur in the lead and gaining fast.

He topped the first rise fifty yards ahead of me. Though I made what speed I could, he was in the middle distance when he reached the edge of the grove. I saw a figure on a bicycle meet him—a woman's. She dismounted; they argued. Then the couple came rapidly toward me, leaving the bicycle. Margery was the woman.

She was half dressed, with a raincoat about her and her hair caught up.

"Take the wheel and make sure the doctor has come," she called to me. "I 'phoned to him; he should be here by the time you are. Hester has shot herself. I want to get Arthur to the train."

They passed me, and I heard the faint whistle of the engine, signaling Plattery, two miles away. We were all too much confused to realize the absurdity of our acts, and the one definite thought, the woman's, was for her lover's escape. They ran toward the station, and I, running in the opposite direction, retrieved the bicycle, and pedalled madly to the cottage.

The doctor had not arrived, but the need for him was not urgent; the girl was dead. With despair crashing in her young, single-track mind, and extraordinary luck in aiming her father's old-fashioned Colt, she had put a 45-calibre bullet in a fatal spot and died

almost instantly. It developed later that she had found my note to Margery under the door, opened it by error, thinking it from Vanderhuyl to her, read it, and with the craziness of her youth, had the revolver in her hand when she answered the 'phone. Considering the triangle betwixt her, her stepmother, and the man, she must have been treading the precipice's edge for some days.

Neighbors had gathered before my arrival. Of course there was paralysis, then confusion, uproar. Equally of course, there was a stupid investigation. The case was clearly suicide; there could appear, even to those minds, no advantage in continuance of the ferretting. What could be done, was done, not very successfully, to kill publicity. The nine days' wonder drooped, dwindled to a whisper, was supplanted by new scandal.

Two weeks passed before I saw Margery alone. When I did, I talked with a woman ravaged. She had gone, not gray, but dull; her personality had sunk. She seemed not to be harried by remorse, regret or even sorrow; to be quite calm. Her world was a Sargasso Sea, without the flotsam. She was taking a trip soon, she did not say where.

She spoke almost casually of the tragedy, saying only one thing of possible significance. It was:

"Do you know, I could think of nothing as I stood with Arthur on the platform that minute with the train coming around the curve, but that I wanted to run my fingers again through that crisp, black hair."

(The End)



# From the Diary of a Diner-Out

By John Eager Lancey

## Monday

THE FRED SMITHS. Mrs. Smith in her flame-colored satin, looking like a vaudeville star. One cocktail—and a great deal more ice and orange juice in it than gin. Some stuff called sherry—*served with the roast*. Escaped at 9.15, avoiding the so-called liqueurs.

## Tuesday

OLD MRS. BOWERSOX'S. A noble old dame, very handsome in her black jet. Talk of old days, and how the late General Bowersox once drank General Grant under the table. Three cocktails, all superb. The formula: half gin, one-fourth Martini-Rossi, one-fourth pineapple juice, and a slug of absinthe. The old lady has two cases of genuine Pontarlier absinthe. With the fish, a colossal Rhine wine—Bodenheimer 1912. Then a Burgundy full of kisses—Clos Vougeot. I forget the year. No champagne, but a tray of excellent liqueurs, including Bénédictine. I almost forgot the Aqua Vit—two big drams between the fish and the entrée. Kissed the homely Henderson girl in the taxi going home. Promised to lend her Havelock Ellis.

## Wednesday

THE WIDOW DE LACY. The usual gang of snuffing uplifters and yearners. But some prime goods out in the kitchen for honest Christians. I got in very early and the widow mixed a shaker thus: half apple-jack, one-third orange juice, a dash of grenadine, and rye whiskey to fill. Had to give her a hug and let her drink one, but got down the rest myself. The wine only so-so—a California Chianti, somewhat sick. But

plenty of it. One of the uplifters stewed. Genuine kummel with the coffee.

## Thursday

STAG party at Fogarty's. The Danish consul present, bringing two quarts of Aqua Vit. It was gone before the oysters came on. Fogarty was lately robbed and has no reliable gin—he suspects the policeman on the beat—but the Aqua Vit was a very satisfactory substitute. Some excellent Beaujolais, though from suspicious-looking bottles, followed by Ploussard. Foggy then got generous and ordered up some Mumm's. The first bottle turned out to be corked. But the rest was very fair. Ended the evening with Scotch highballs. Johnson, before he passed away, invited me to dinner for next Wednesday. Says he has a keg of genuine English ale, smuggled in as a keg of herring.

## Friday

JACK HAWORTH'S. A long trip into the suburbs. Very chilly. Then a cocktail made of that fearful synthetic gin. It tasted exactly like dog soap. No wine. Home-brew beer made by the Haworths' colored cook. Fair flavor, but perfectly flat. After two glasses I ducked. Mrs. Haworth begins to look old.

## Saturday

SUPERB evening at Hausmann's. No cocktails, but a couple of gorgeous mint-juleps made of Bourbon. Then some Rautenthaler 1909, followed by Lacrimae Christi and Moët et Chandon. Old brown brandy, probably about 1875, instead of liqueurs. Then the table

cleared, and Gustav, the butler, staggered in with ten *Humpen* of the best malt liquor I have drunk in two years. A rich, fruity *Dunkles*, somewhat like Würzburger. The first round disappeared like water on a red-hot stove. Jenkins almost wept with joy. Sat until 1:30. Then a round of *Kirschenwasser*, and home. Hausmann is a capital fellow. His wife grows more beautiful as she ages. She will be magnificent at 40. Must send her some flowers tomorrow.

### Sunday

FEARFUL affair at Herbert Abbott's studio. No less than six cocktails—two Martinis, two Taverns, and then two mysterious (but very lovely) ones, apparently made of rye whiskey, pine-

apple juice and some liqueur. Sat beside Mrs. Abbott's younger sister—a very pretty girl. Some excellent sherry. Abbott was stingy with it, but his sister-in-law slipped me hers, and so I made out very well. Then some prime Sauterne, with anonymous but very fine Burgundy to wash it down. Dutch *Schnapps* with the coffee. Then port for the rest of the evening. Abbott loosened up, and it ran like rain-water. George Thompson so badly singed that he had to be put to bed upstairs. Old Man Forsythe very tight toward the end. I kept my legs perfectly, and took the sister-in-law home. Have her on for lunch Tuesday. The food, however, was too rich, and I caught a cold on the way home in the taxi. Feel somewhat rocky. . . .



## Unreason

By M. G. Sabel

WHAT makes a miracle  
But the mystery?  
Is it not so?

Yet you want me to tell you  
This and that  
About our love!



WHEN God created man, He rested. When He created woman, He retired.



THE best way to quiet your conscience is to start counting the money.



# Répétition Générale

By George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

## § 1

**THE Age of Emotions.**—The most tragic man I know of is the one who suffers emotions comparatively late in life: the man, for instance, who falls deeply in love for the first time when he is in his late thirties or middle forties, or the man, say, who becomes a deferred patriot, or blue cynic, or religious zealot or what not in his mature years. The lucky and happy man is he who runs the scale of emotions early in life—in his twenties—and who, when he grows older, is thus able recollectively to sift and assort them, and to keep the ones that are pleasing to him and get rid of the ones that are not. Emotions are the province of youth. When age is emotional, it is ridiculous, as ridiculous as the spectacle of the present-day Sarah Bernhardt mooning over a young stage lover.

## § 2

**Confession.**—Compared to other Americans I seem to suffer from what may be called an excess of amorous disvulnerability. That is to say, the average American, even the average civilized American, appears to be a good deal more susceptible to sexual suggestion than I am. For three or four years past, for example, I have heard constant discussion of the indecency of the current fashions for women, yet I have never, in all that time, seen a single woman who seemed to me to be dressed indecently. I hope I am not actually unæsthetic to female charms. If it were advertised tomorrow that all the pupils of some fashionable finishing school

would parade down Fifth avenue in the altogether, I'd probably turn out as quickly to see the show as the rectors of the Fifth avenue churches. But it is quite beyond my comprehension that anyone should be shocked, whether pleasantly or unpleasantly, by the mere spectacle of a woman's leg. Do the current fashions—or, rather, the fashions just going out—show anything else? If so, I must be blind.

In the field of representative art I am equally unable to experience the thrills which appear to shake my countrymen. I read "Jurgen" from cover to cover without the slightest suspicion that there was anything lascivious in it; I was frankly astonished when the Comstocks began snuffling and leering over it. Today, as a result of their attack, the book is in such demand that single copies sell for \$25, and everyone who owns one is constantly beset by persons trying to borrow it. I find that many such persons, when it is lent to them, discover very inflammatory stuff in it—stuff almost as inflammatory as that which Sunday-school boys (and probably superintendents, too) discover in the Old Testament. But all that I can find in it are a few quite harmless jocosities, all of them very artistically swathed and varnished. If such stuff is actually obscene, then I am an idiot.

## § 3

**Pollyanna Note.**—The Creator is imperfect deliberately, intentionally. Save He were given to imperfections, millions of His creatures would starve to death. He made the human eye imperfect that thousands of oculists might earn a live-

lihood; the human foot, that thousands of idiots might live by chiropody; the human finger-nail, that thousands of females might substitute manicuring for street-walking. Through His sapiently manœuvered physical imperfections, thousands of doctors have jobs; through His shrewdly wrought mental imperfections, thousands of shyster lawyers get their bread and butter; through His all-wise manipulation of fatal imperfections He has guaranteed a living even to livery stable owners, florists, campstool manufacturers, black cotton glove merchants, clergymen, bad organists, worse singers, and undertakers.

## § 4

*Political Theories.*—Every age the advocates of the dominant political theory seek to give it dignity by identifying it with whatever contemporaneous desire of man happens to be most powerful. In the days of monarchy, monarchy was depicted as the defender of the faith. In our present era of democracy, democracy is depicted as the only safe guardian of liberty. And the communism of tomorrow, I suppose, will be sold to the booboisie as the only true palladium of peace, justice and plenty. All of these attempts to hook up cause and effect are nonsensical. Monarchy was fundamentally not a defender of the faith at all, but a rival and enemy to the faith. Democracy does not promote liberty; it diminishes and destroys liberty. And communism, as the example of Russia already shows, is not a fountain that gushes peace, justice and plenty, but a sewer in which they are drowned.

## § 5

*The Uplift.*—Someone told me the other day that there were now no less than 35,000 societies in the United States devoted to some form or other of the uplift—societies for the Americanization of immigrants, for protecting working-girls against drummers, for putting Bibles into the bed-rooms

of week-end hotels, for teaching Polish women how to wash their babies, for instructing school-children in ring-around-a-rosy, for crusading against the cigarette, for preventing accidents in rolling-mills, for making street-car conductors more polite, for testing the mentality of Czecho-Slovaks, for teaching folk-songs, for restoring the United States to Great Britain, for building day-nurseries in the devastated regions of France, for training deaconesses, for fighting the house-fly, for warning young mothers against giving their infants home-brew, for preventing cruelty to mules and Tom-cats, for forcing householders to clean their backyards, for planting trees, for saving the Indians, for sending colored boys to Harvard, for opposing Sunday movies, for censoring magazines, for God knows what else. In every large city such organizations swarm, and every one of them has an executive secretary who tries incessantly to horn into the newspapers. Their agents penetrate to the remotest hamlets in the land, and their circulars, pamphlets and other fulminations swamp the mails. In Washington and at every state capital they have their lobbyists, and every legislator is driven half frantic by their innumerable and preposterous demands. Each of them wants a law passed to make its crusade official and compulsory; each is forever hunting for suckers with money.

The latest of these uplifting *vereins* to score a ten-strike is the one that sponsors the so-called Maternity Bill. That measure will probably be a law by the time the present words get into print, and the over-burdened taxpayer, at a cost of \$3,000,000 a year, will be called upon to support a new posse of perambulating gabblers and snouters. The influences behind the bill were exposed in the Senate by Senator Reed, of Missouri, but to no effect; a majority of the other Senators, in order to get rid of the propagandists in charge of it, had already promised to vote for it. Its one intelligible aim, as Senator Reed showed, is to give government



jobs at good salaries to a gang of nose-  
old maids. These virgins, once the  
measure is on the statute-books, will  
traverse the country teaching married  
women how to have babies in a ship-  
shape and graceful manner, and how  
to keep them alive after having them.  
Only one of the proposed experts in  
this new science has ever been married  
herself; nevertheless, the old gals will  
all be authorized to go out among the  
Italian and Yiddish women, each with  
ten or twelve head of kids to her credit,  
and tell them all about it. According  
to Senator Reed, the ultimate aim of  
the fanatics who favor the scheme is to  
provide for the official registration of  
expectant mothers, that they may be  
warned what to eat, what movies to see,  
and what midwives to send for when  
the time comes. Imagine a young bride  
going down to the County Clerk's office  
to report herself! And imagine an  
elderly and anthropopagous spinster  
coming around next day to advise her!  
Or a boozy political doctor!

All these uplifting crazes, it seems to  
me, are artificial. They are set going,  
not by the plain people spontaneously,  
but by professionals who hope to get  
jobs out of them. The Anti-Saloon  
League is the archetype of all the cur-  
rent organizations for bringing on the  
New Jerusalem prematurely. It is  
owned and operated by gentlemen who  
make excellent livings stirring up the  
boobs; if their salaries were cut off, all  
their moral passion would ooze out, and  
Prohibition would be dead in two weeks.  
So with the rest of the uplifting camor-  
ras. Their present enormous prosperi-  
ty, I believe, is due in large part to a  
fact that is never thought of, to wit, the  
fact that the women's colleges of the  
country, for a dozen years past, have  
been turning out far more graduates  
than could be utilized as teachers. These  
supernumerary lady Ph. D.'s almost  
unanimously resort to the uplift—and  
the uplift saves them. In the early days  
of higher education for women, prac-  
tically all the graduates thrown upon  
the world got jobs as teachers, but now  
a good many are left over. Moreover,

it has been discovered that the uplift is  
easier than teaching, and that it pays a  
great deal better. It is a rare woman  
professor who gets more than \$5,000 a  
year, but there are plenty of uplifting  
jobs at \$8,000 and \$10,000, and in the  
future there will be some prizes at  
twice as much. No wonder the learned  
gals fall upon them so eagerly.

The annual production of male  
Ph. D.'s is also far beyond the legiti-  
mate needs of the nation, but here the  
congestion is relieved by the greater  
and more varied demand for masculine  
labor. If a young man emerging from  
Columbia or Ohio Wesleyan as *Philoso-  
phie Doctor* finds it impossible to get a  
job teaching he can always go on the  
road as a salesman of dental supplies,  
or enlist in the marines, or study law,  
or enter the ministry, or go to work in  
a coal-mine, or a slaughter-house, or a  
bucket-shop, or begin bootlegging or  
selling mine-stock to widows and re-  
tired clergymen. The woman graduate  
faces far fewer opportunities. She is  
commonly too old and too worn by med-  
itation to go upon the stage in anything  
above the grade of a patent-medicine  
show, she has been so poisoned by in-  
struction in sex hygiene that she shies  
at marriage, and most of the standard  
professions and grafts of the world are  
closed to her. The invention of the  
uplift came as a godsend to her. Had  
not some mute, inglorious Edison de-  
vised it at the right time, humanity  
would be disgraced today by the spec-  
tacle of hordes of lady Ph. D.'s going  
to work in steam-laundries, hooch shows  
and chewing-gum factories. As it is,  
they are all taken care of by the in-  
numerable societies for making the  
whole world virtuous and happy. One  
may laugh at the aims and methods of  
such societies—for example, at the ab-  
surd lodges for Americanizing immi-  
grants, *i.e.*, degrading them to the level  
of the native peasantry. But one thing,  
at least, they accomplish: they provide  
comfortable and permanent jobs for  
hundreds and thousands of deserving  
women, most of whom are far more  
profitably employed trying to make

Methodists out of Sicilians than they would be if they were trying to make husbands out of bachelors.

### § 6

*Autobiographical Note.*—It has been my embarrassing experience, as I suppose it has been the embarrassing experience of many critics, to find that in personal contact bad artists so often turn out to be charming fellows and good artists eminently unpleasant ones. During the last year I have met eleven men whose work I have criticised; seven of whom were incompetents and whom I had critically pummelled without quarter, and the other four of whom were sound artists whom I had bathed in the greases of my respect and admiration. When I met the seven incompetents, I found them agreeable and amiable men, interesting to talk with and extremely companionable. When I met the four sound craftsmen, I could scarcely bear them. They were devoid of social grace; they were stupid; they were heavy as lead; they were bores.

### § 7

*Coincidence or Criticism?*—Throughout the present bad theatrical season, with its scores of incorrigibly odoriferous plays, I have observed that the most conspicuous advertisement in the programs (printed directly under the bill of the play) reads: "*Wonderful Liederkranz Cheese.*"

### § 8

*On Minorities.*—It seems to be a firmly established principle of latter-day American law that a minority has no rights whatever. If they exist theoretically, as fossils surviving from better days, there is certainly no machinery for safeguarding them. The current majority, if it so desired tomorrow, could add an amendment to the Constitution prohibiting the chewing of tobacco; as everyone knows, the Supreme Court, which has long since torn up

the Bill of Rights, would promptly uphold it. More, the Supreme Court would as promptly uphold a law prohibiting the use of chewing gum—on the ground that any unnecessary chewing, however harmless, might tempt the boobery to chew tobacco. This is no attempt at jocosity. That precise thing has been done in the case of Prohibition. The Eighteenth Amendment prohibits the sale of intoxicating beverages; the Supreme Court has decided plainly that, in order to enforce it, Congress also has the right to prohibit the sale of beverages that are admittedly *not* intoxicating. It could, indeed, specifically prohibit near-beer tomorrow, or any drink containing malt or hops, however low in alcohol; the more extreme Prohibitionists actually demand that it do so forthwith.

Worse, a minority not only has no inalienable right in the United States; it is not even lawfully entitled to be heard. This was well established by the case of the Socialists elected to the New York Assembly. All the voters who elected these Socialists asked for was the privilege of choosing spokesmen to voice their doctrines in a peaceable manner. This privilege was denied them. In precisely the same way, the present national House of Representatives, which is overwhelmingly Republican, might expel all of its Democratic members. The voters who elected them would have no redress. If the same men were elected again, or other men of the same views, they might be expelled again. More, it would apparently be perfectly constitutional for the majority in Congress to pass a statute denying the use of the mails to the minority—that is, for the Republicans to bar all Democratic papers from the mails. I do not toy with mere theories. The thing has actually been done in the case of the Socialists. Under the present law, indeed—upheld by the Supreme Court—the Postmaster-General, without any further authority from Congress, might deny the mails to all Democrats. Or to all Catholics. Or to all Socinians. Or to all violoncellists.

Yet more, a citizen who happens to belong to a minority is not even safe in his person: he may be put into prison, and for very long periods, for the simple offense of differing from the majority. This happened, it will be recalled, in the case of Debs. Debs by no means advised citizens subject to military duty, in time of war, to evade that duty, as the newspapers of the time alleged. On the contrary, he advised them to meet and discharge that duty. All he did was to say that, even in time of war, he was against war—that he regarded it as a barbarous method of settling disputes between nations. For thus differing from the majority on a question of mere theory he was sentenced to ten years in prison. The case of the three young Russians arrested in New York was even more curious. These poor idiots were jailed for the almost incredible crime of circulating purely academic protests against making war upon a country with which the United States was legally at peace, to wit, Russia. For this preposterous offense two of them were sent to prison for fifteen years, and one, a girl, for ten years, and the Supreme Court upheld their convictions. Here was a plain case of proscription and punishment for a mere opinion. There was absolutely no contention that the protest of the three prisoners could have any practical result—that it might, for example, destroy the *morale* of American soldiers 6,000 miles away, and cut off from all communication with the United States. The three victims were punished in that appalling manner simply because they ventured to criticise an executive usurpation which happened, at the moment, to have the support of public opinion, and particularly of the then President of the United States and of the holders of Russian government securities.

It must be obvious, viewing such leading cases critically—and hundreds like them might be cited—that the old rights of the free American, so carefully laid down by the Bill of Rights, are now worth nothing. Bit by bit, Congress and the State Legislatures have invaded

and nullified them, and today they are so flimsy that no lawyer not insane would attempt to defend his client by bringing them up. Imagine trying to defend a man denied the use of the mails by the Postmaster-General, without hearing or even formal notice, on the ground that the Constitution guarantees the right of free speech! The very catchpolls in the courtroom would snicker. I say that the legislative arm is primarily responsible for this gradual enslavement of the American; the truth is, of course, that the executive and judicial arms are responsible to a scarcely less degree. Our law has not kept pace with the development of our bureaucracy; there is no machinery provided for curbing its excesses. In Prussia, in the old days, there were special courts for the purpose, and a citizen oppressed by the police or by any other public official could get relief and redress. The guilty functionary could be fined, mulcted in damages, demoted, cashiered, or even jailed. But in the United States today there are no such tribunals. A citizen attacked by the Postmaster-General simply has no redress whatever; the courts have refused, over and over again, to interfere save in cases of obvious fraud. Nor is there, it would seem, any remedy for the unconstitutional acts of Prohibition agents. Some time ago, when Senator Stanley, of Kentucky, tried to have a law passed forbidding them to break into a citizen's house in violation of the Bill of Rights, the Prohibitionists mustered up their serfs in the Senate against him, and he was voted down.

The Supreme Court, had it been so disposed, might have put a stop to all this sinister buffoonery long ago. There was a time, indeed, when it was alert to do so. That was during the Civil War. But since then the court has gradually succumbed to the prevailing doctrine that the minority has no rights that the majority is bound to respect. As it is at present constituted, it shows little disposition to go to the rescue of the harassed freeman. When property is menaced it displays a laudable diligence,

but when it comes to the mere rights of the citizen it seems strongly inclined to give the prosecution the benefit of every doubt. Two justices commonly dissent: MM. Brandeis and Holmes. They hold the last switch-trench of the old constitutional line. When they depart to realms of bliss the Bill of Rights will be buried with them.

## § 9

*The American University.*—External critics of the American university—that is, the first-grade universities of the East, such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Cornell, and even their lesser brothers like Williams, Dartmouth and Amherst—make the mistake, it seems to me, of considering it purely as a hall of unqualified metaphysics when it is in reality more or less a hall of social metaphysics. The American college is a social institution before it is an institution of learning. This, of course, is always stoutly denied, yet every man who has gone through such a university knows the truth of it. It is a finishing school before it is a laboratory. If the American university doesn't teach a man wisdom, it at least teaches him how to loiter through life gracefully, and how to make the other man do his work for him, and how to laugh and sing, and how to make love, and how to remember just a little more romantically than another man, and how to smile tolerantly and pleasantly at his critics. My own university gave me no learning, no wisdom; but it gave me some of these other things, and I am not sure that they are not as important in this serio-comic world as the former.

## § 10

*A Needed Tome.*—Why doesn't someone write a book describing, in a calm, objective manner, all of the religions now on tap in the United States, from Roman Catholicism to Methodism, and from Christian Science to Reformed Judaism? Every now and then, engaged upon my customary politico-

theological diversions, I feel the need of such a volume very acutely. What, precisely, is the current Presbyterian doctrine regarding infant damnation? What are the rights and prerogatives of a Protestant Episcopal bishop? How does the Baptist official dogma depict hell? What would happen, if anything, to a Mormon elder who married a Jewess? What do the United Brethren teach regarding the atonement, the virgin birth, prayer? What are the duties of a Catholic regarding going to mass? How many different varieties of Lutherans are there in the Republic, and on what points do they differ? Do the Southern Methodists still advocate slavery? Do the Dunkards believe that a man who wears a necktie and washes his neck will be damned? Do the Quakers absolutely prohibit one of their communicants defending himself in a bar-room row? What happens post-mortem to a Salvation Army colonel who lifts 40 cents from the tambourine? Can one be a good Christian Scientist, and still admit that Mother Eddy borrowed her balderdash from Dr. Quimby?

It is almost impossible to get intelligible answers to such questions by tackling members of the various sects. Too often even their ordained clergy are astonishingly ignorant; in nearly all cases the replies one receives are corrupted by a desire to make a good impression. I know many Christian Scientists, one of them charming, but I was never able to obtain a clear understanding of the Eddyian magic until Dr. Woodbridge Riley explained it—and then, as you may recall, the chief successors to the celebrated "female Trismegistus" raised such a row that the explanation was suppressed. Try to find out about infant damnation from the nearest Presbyterian elder; nine times out of ten he will try to fool you into believing that the doctrine was never held at all. Ask a Southern Methodist when the sanhedrin of his church formally repudiated slavery; you will be lucky if he does not report you to the Ku Klux Klan, the secular

arm of his faith. Even the Catholics seem to have no clear statement of doctrine for impartial students. All their books are argumentative.

Religion, though it is seldom discussed honestly, is a very important matter in the United States. Most of the crazy laws that now afflict us originated in the theological hallucinations of this or that preposterous sect. At the moment, the Methodist-Baptist-Presbyterian bloc is on deck, and we all suffer from the insane fear of hell that afflicts its dervishes; in order to save them, you and I are asked to abandon the drinking customs that have obtained among civilized men since the days of Gog and Magog, and that were formally ratified by Christ Himself. But I defy you to find a book that expounds clearly the theological concepts upon which this fear is based. Every American legislature is overrun by Methodist preachers engaged in lobbying for this or that new law, and yet no one, not even the average Methodist, seems to know just what Methodism is. Who anoints its bishops? How are its churches organized and managed? What, precisely, is a deacon, and to what extent can he bind and loose? What would happen to a Methodist who got stewed at a wedding and offered to dance with the bride? What is the punishment provided by the canon law for a Sunday-school superintendent taken in *flagrante delicto* with a female missionary to the heathen Italians? These are not idle questions; they are genuinely important, for in a few more years all of us will have to obey the whole Methodist canon law, as we now obey what seem to be large parts of it. But I know of no book that states it clearly. More than once I have applied to Methodist clergymen for such a book, but not one of them could supply it.

What I propose is that all of the 347 different faiths listed in the Census records be described briefly and accurately by a specialist in such tosh. I herewith nominate the Dr. Riley aforesaid. He has spent a lifetime investigating that sort of thing, and he knows how to write.

Let him get the whole thing into one volume. I herewith put down my name for ten copies.

## § 11

*Dramatic Art and the Red-Haired Copy Boy.*—The ruling ethic of the American press so far as the theatre is concerned is one of unctuous *laissez faire*. "If you can't praise, don't dispraise," is the editorial injunction to the reviewer. The theatre in America is a great business—greater even than the department store—and a great business should be treated with proper respect. What if the reviewer does not admire "The Key to Heaven"? It played to more than *twelve thousand dollars* last week; it *must* be good. The theatre must be helped, and the way to help it is uninterruptedly to speak well of it. Fine drama? Art? A newspaper has no concern with fine drama and art; the public is not interested in such things. A newspaper's concern is primarily with news. But is not dramatic swindling, the selling of spurious wares at high prices, news? Is not an attempt to corrupt the future of the theatre as an honorable institution and an honorable business also news, news not so very much less interesting, perhaps, than the three-column account of an ex-Follies girl's adulteries? The reviewer, for his impertinence, is assigned henceforth to cover the Jefferson Market police court.

The key-note of the American journalistic attitude toward the theatre is a stagnant optimism. Dramatic art and the red-haired copy boy are the two stock jokes of the American newspaper office. Here and there one encounters a reviewer who, through either the forcefulness or the amiability of his personality, is successful for a short time in evading the editorial shackles—there are a few such still extant as I write. But soon or late the rattle of the chains is heard and the reviewer that was is no more. He is an American, and must suffer the penalty that an American who aspires to cultured viewpoint and defiant love of beauty must ever suffer. For—



so George Santayana, late professor of philosophy in Harvard University, in "Character and Opinion in the United States"—"the luckless American who is drawn to poetic subtlety, pious retreats, or gay passions, nevertheless has the categorical excellence of work, growth, enterprise, reform, and prosperity dinned into his ears: every door is open in this direction and shut in the other; so that he either folds up his heart and withers in a corner—in remote places you sometimes find such a solitary gaunt idealist—or else he flies to Oxford or Florence or Montmartre to save his soul—or perhaps not to save it."

## § 12

*Utopia.*—The ideal of democracy has been reached at last. It is now impossible for a gentleman to hold public office in America. To do so he must make oath to support the Constitution of the United States, and to make oath to support the Constitution of the United States he must subscribe to the doctrine that it is criminal for two civilized men, meeting in a public eating-house to dine, to wash down their victuals with a bottle of Clos de Vougeot.

## § 13

*Government Ownership.*—One of the most convincing arguments for government ownership that I have encountered is the Hotel Washington in the Panama Canal Zone. Operated by the United States Government, it is—with the possible exceptions of the Adlon in Berlin and the Roche-Noir at Trouville—the most perfectly managed hotel in the world. It is beautiful; it is unostentatious; it is as quiet as one's own home; it is scrupulously clean; it is inexpensive. The service is prompt and extremely courteous; the irritating atmosphere of the usual hotel is completely absent; the servants have been trained not to keep their hands constantly tipward; the air is that of a large and agreeable country club. The great windows of the rooms to the front of the hotel swing

outward to the palm-fronted sea—the most beautiful prospect revealed by any window that I have ever looked through. To the rear is a great palm court circled by wide, white verandas. The halls and corridors of the building are broad and tropically still. (The servants do their work almost unseen.) The dining halls cover a city block; they are extremely simple in design—high and cool green—and extremely lovely; and the food is as good as any you will find the world over. You can't get a drink—it being American territory—but you may bring your bottle to the table and they'll serve it for you without mock secrecy or whispering ado. The United States Government may not be able to run a railroad, but it seems to know more about running a hotel than all the other bonifaces in the country combined.

## § 14

*Colonial Reflection.*—The more I plow through current American fiction, the more I understand the critical disquiet of such faithful colonial Britishers as Prof. Dr. Brander Matthews, Prof. Dr. Stuart P. Sherman, and the alarmed Anglo-Ochsen of the *New York Times*. Nine-tenths of the new novels of any distinction seem to be written by hyphenates with such disgusting names as Dos Passos, Benét, Dreiser, Hergesheimer, Ferber, Sibert-Cather, Hecht and Fitzgerald. Worse, most of these hyphenates pass over the Anglo-Saxons who cherish the Puritan tradition among us, and write about their own or other outlandish people—Dos Passos about a low-flung Italian, Dreiser about a loose German girl, Hergesheimer about the bawdries of Havana, Miss Cather about Bohemian immigrants, and so on. Still worse, even the Anglo-Saxon fictioneers follow the same abominable habit. Cabell writes about medieval Frenchmen, Fergusson about Spaniards, Sherwood Anderson about the strange foreigners of the mining regions and the Middle West. Even Sinclair Lewis is recreant to the Ochsen ideal. His "Main Street" has set up Gopher Prairie as the

generic name for the typical American town. Well, Gopher Prairie is composed of two words—and both of them are French.

§ 15

*Education.*—In most discussions of the aims and methods of education there is the error of expecting too much of the schoolmaster. Nearly all such discussions are carried on by schoolmasters or by ex-schoolmasters—for example, college presidents—and so they assume that such fellows are genuinely civilized men, and hence capable of varnishing their pupils with culture. This is true only occasionally—and miraculously. The average schoolmaster is actually quite destitute of culture, in any real sense. He is simply a fourth-rate man who has been stuffed with formal ideas and taught to do a few conventional intellectual tricks. Contact with him, far from being inspiring to any youth of alert mentality, is really hopelessly depressing. Thus it is nonsensical to talk of him as if he were a Socrates, an Aristotle or even a Johannes Müller or a Leschetizky. He is actually much more closely related to a barber, a Pullman conductor or a canned-goods broker. A worthy man—but don't expect too much of him. To ask him to struggle out of his puddle of platitudes and plunge into the whirlpool of surmise and speculation that carries on the fragile shallop of human progress—to do this is as absurd as to ask an Italian with a hand-organ to match Beethoven.

§ 16

*Footnote in a Book on Women.*—A woman is almost generally subversive of a man's dignity. There is something about a woman—even the noblest and finest—that corrupts in greater or lesser degree the texture of a man's position before the bar of the public. A man will labor for years to achieve a dignity in the eyes of his fellows, and then suddenly along will come a woman who will captivate him and in a jiffy send his dig-

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nity glimmering. She need do not a single tangible suspect thing, yet the result is ever the same.

§ 17

*A Good Man Wasted.*—When the ninth-rate police reporters who represent the great American journals in Europe lack other subjects they send home elaborate lies about the doings of the late Kaiser and idiotic speculations as to his future. Why has it never occurred to anyone to bring him to the United States and employ him professionally in introducing civilization into such States as West Virginia? The Kaiser's defects have been heard of so much that everyone has forgotten his undoubted merits. He is by talent and training a first-rate administrator, and a specialist in social justice, law and order. Whatever the deficiencies of the Germany he ruled so long, it was at least a country that had an honest, an economical and a thoroughly competent government—one in which every man, however mighty, had to obey the laws, and every man, however poor, got a square deal in the courts. Until the war brought the Germans the great boon of democracy they knew practically nothing of poverty, or graft. There were no slums in their cities. Their laboring classes were protected against industrial accidents, sickness and unemployment. Profiteering in necessities was rigorously prohibited by the police. Men preaching unpopular doctrines had the full protection of the laws. (Think of Nietzsche, and, at the other extreme, Bebel.) Their cities were scrupulously clean. Their railroad service was cheap and efficient. They were not harassed by Prohibitionists, Y. M. C. A. grafters, Billy Sundays, vice crusaders, women politicians, Blue Sunday fanatics, and other such vermin. Their system of castes was peculiar and admirable. A colonel in the Army ranked above a stock broker, however rich; Gerhart Hauptmann and Richard Strauss were regarded by everybody, even including newspaper editorial writers, as more important men than the current movie

stars. The Kaiser, of course, was not responsible for all this. But he at least grew up under the system, and so learned how to operate it. No one has ever accused him of opposing it.

Now his great experience is going to waste—and West Virginia is plunging down the chute to barbarism. Already, in fact, it has reached a level below that of Santo Domingo, Honduras and Nicaragua, and almost as low as that of Armenia, Poland and Soviet Russia. Imagine a commonwealth in which it is apparently quite lawful for rich men to employ professional murderers to butcher poor men *ad libitum*—worse, in which the sworn officers of justice are appointed, paid and commanded by those rich men! The thing seems fabulous, and yet the evidence that it goes on is overwhelming. Some time ago, tiring of this outrage and deprived by such forces of their plain constitutional rights to organize, certain of the poor men of the State, following abundant American precedents, rose in arms. At once they were disarmed by the Federal government, and now hundreds of them face trial on charges of homicide. In other words, it is homicide in West Virginia for a poor man to resist being murdered for exercising his constitutional rights—and when he comes to trial for his life he must submit to being tried by judges appointed by his enemies and juries empanelled by sheriffs chosen and paid by those enemies! Certainly this is justice with a vengeance. Was anything of the sort heard of in Germany under the Kaiser? Surely not. The worst accusation ever made against the Kaiser is that he got his subjects into

a war that was against their best interests. But no one has ever alleged that, if he had held his throne after that war, he would have begun hanging them for its failure.

I therefore propose that he be engaged at a salary of \$25,000 a year, naturalized by act of Congress, and given the job of establishing order and decency in West Virginia, with a free hand. As he stands today, roosting in Holland, he is a menace to the peace of Europe. In West Virginia he would have a task within his talents, appealing to his taste, and full of usefulness. He is getting on in years, and his old ambitions, no doubt, are cooling. I believe that he would welcome this chance to prove his professional competence, and that his administration would be an enormous success. One thing is plain: the United States cannot go on safely with a West Virginia within its borders. Already the state government there has broken down three times and called upon the federal power to aid it. Such states present a far worse menace than Bolshevism; soon or late they will provoke (and with complete justification) an uprising of the whole proletariat. But two plausible solutions of the problem present themselves. One is to reduce every such state to the condition of a territory, and administer it by the Army and Navy, as Haiti and the Canal Zone are administered. The other is to bring in some genuine expert, and give him a free hand. I formally nominate the Kaiser. If objection is made to him on the ground that he is a foreign potentate, then I nominate General Erich Ludendorff, a commoner.



# The Truth of It

*By Edward Tearney*

I

JEDEDIAH knew he was dying from the fact that George and his family had come. He had suspected it several days ago from the gravity of the doctors; but this was confirmatory.

Jedediah's head was clear enough; the only thing was the lassitude and growing feeling of detachment; and he lay on his back staring up at the high ceiling.

He had never got along well with George; they were too much alike. Then, too, George had many of his mother's traits; the same roundabout methods of attaining that which he wanted; her small hypocrisies; and in his ruddy face more than a hint of her fish-woman temper.

George, when he came up, was bland, explaining elaborately that he had business in Cleveland and, to kill two birds with one stone, had brought Mabel and the kids along. The nurse with her usual tact withdrew into the next room.

"If you want me," she said in her cool little voice, "just call."

"Wouldn't you like Mabel to bring the kids up after awhile?" George asked presently.

"No," Jedediah grunted. He had been prepared for this; besides which, he hadn't precisely liked the appraisal in George's hard blue eyes while the nurse was in the room.

George nervously chewed at the end of a match and glanced down self-consciously at his thick, folded hands.

"How is that rubber business going?" Jedediah demanded acrimoniously.

"Oh, pretty well—not as well as I hoped though. That's one of the reasons I came up to Cleveland."

This last rather pleased Jedediah, and he gave his son a long look from under his hooded lids. George hitched a little nearer.

"I don't know whether you would have developed it like we did, or not," he went on. "We're thinking of an amalgamation now—since we aren't able to whip the Courtlend crowd into line!"

Jedediah was again aware of the protuberant eyes.

"So that's it," he thought. "Trying to drag advice out of me on my death bed!"

Vaguely conscious that he had blundered, George tried to turn the talk, but his father would not let him. Presently he got up, called the nurse back, and withdrew.

Relaxing, Jedediah watched her as with rolled-up sleeves she busied herself at the window with some glasses and phials. The tender femininity of her arms had been the first thing which had attracted him.

She now came over. "Not tired after your talk, are you?"

"I think," said Jedediah, "that I would like a drink of water."

He drank slowly with his eyes fastened on her soft throat, breathing in as deeply as he could her physical fragrance.

Perhaps aware of the power of her nearness, she sat down and smiled.

"You seem better today, not a bit tired."

Jedediah frowned suddenly.

"Was it this morning my wife was in?" he asked; "or last night?"

"This morning—about nine. Did you want her now?"

"No," he said hastily, "don't call her! Let her alone! Did she say when she'd be up again?"

"She usually comes in about four."

"And what time is it now?"

The nurse glanced at her wrist and told him it was eleven.

"Umph," he muttered. But his eyes were brighter. Something in her expression, as she had answered his last question, had arrested his attention. He studied her for perhaps forty seconds. How much some of these young nurses know—perhaps because they see so much! For when a man is dying, something happens to his reserve; his sentinel consciousness grows torpid, and things which he has spent his life concealing seem no longer worth it!—his own feeling toward George, for instance! . . . So she had been putting two and two together!

The train of thought was not unpleasantly broken by her saying:

"I was afraid you might attempt to discuss business with your son."

Jedediah shook his head. A slight smile played about the corners of her pink mouth—a smile he might interpret as he pleased. Then she leaned forward and laid a cool hand upon his old brow; and when she got up, he turned his head slightly to follow the action of her supple hips.

"Decay," he reflected. "That's what death is—decay. . . . How she exudes her sex. . . . In my day it was too often balked—sex. We were more ashamed of it; most denied it altogether, especially the women. But it's different now. This is a new age. There are ways out now even if a first mistake is made. Divorce is now accepted. But it was different then—it took more courage! I reasoned that it would hurt me too much in a business way!"

A sensational Cleveland divorce suit of the early '90's came back to him. He had known Birdwood rather well. They were living in New York now, Bird-

wood and his comic opera wife; had been living there ever since! Birdwood had carried the thing off; but the attendant, screaming publicity had wholly dissolved Jedediah's own only half-formed resolution, and, falling into the way of taking his diversion furtively and where he could find it, he had gradually abandoned the idea. Stage doors did well enough; and then, after he got older, Lottie Watson's! A compromise, of course—but what is life but a compromise? Birdwood had been different. Birdwood hailed originally from Maryland; he had a soft Eastern way of slurring his "r's," and an Eastern point of view.

"There's no use talking, blood counts!" Jedediah reflected. "If I'd tried it, I'd have made a mess of it! It was easy enough for Birdwood, but they'd have pulled me down!"

He licked his lips savagely, his thoughts now having returned to George. Strange that Mabel hadn't blundered up on her own account; she wasn't usually so easily suppressed!

## II

JEDEDIAH had always got a certain satisfaction from Mabel; she was so obviously the same sort of mistake he had made himself; before she was done she was going to give George trouble! A nice pair—the bland, pop-eyed George, and Mabel with her hopeless dowdiness.

George, he happened to know, had been seeking his diversions elsewhere lately. As a matter of fact, one or two stories had come to his ears. That sort of thing was bad business—would be especially bad if Mabel ever took it into her head to sue him for divorce, for there were still some people in the country with old-time ideas of morality, whatever might be said! George was big, but not big enough to afford that. . . .

And the prospect of his son's coming a cropper brought a smile to the sunken old mouth.

"Pleasant thoughts!" exclaimed the nurse, coming in.



"Yes," said Jedediah drily. "I was thinking of my son. What time is it now?" he then asked.

"Nearly three."

He frowned. Only an hour!

The girl moved over to the window, busy with a thermometer, and he lay watching her; the deft, sure movements of her slender hands; the little tendril of hair escaping her cap; the soft contour of her cheek. But what he liked better than anything else was her shoulders and the fleshly ground-tones of her voice. It was his way sometimes to lead her into speech for the mere sake of hearing it. Particularly after Emma had been in. It soothed him.

He sighed. "A curious thing, the approach of death—different from the popular idea. Here I am on the threshold, and obsessed by this girl! Tomorrow, if I choose to let go, I'll be dead . . ."

"Miss Johnson," he suddenly said aloud, "my life's been a failure."

She came over and sat down.

"What do you mean?" she said curiously; but he saw from her eyes that the question was idle, only an encouragement to go on.

"I shall die tonight," he continued. "And when a man reaches my state it's time for him to die. I've just discovered that I can't move my legs. But I believe my mind's more active than it's ever been—all my vitality seems to have run up there—I wonder if you know what I mean? Sometimes I think you know more than you let me see!"

The same smile as when he had spoken of George came into her pink mouth.

"You don't seem to mind much," she said.

"I don't. What would be the use! But if I were a young man I would."

She nodded and calmly returned his look. "I think I see."

"What time is it?" he asked.

"Quarter till four."

"Well, my wife'll be in here in a minute; but don't let her stay long. And she will probably have my daughter-in-law with her. Shoo them out as soon

as you can. Tell them I'm not well—anything. But get rid of them!" directed Jedediah.

A rap sounded as he finished, and he hooded his eyes and lay back.

Emma entered first, followed by Mabel with her largest girl in tow.

"Do you know who that is on the bed?" Mabel's foolish voice asked the child.

Jedediah lay quite still, his drooping lids permitting him to see them only from the waist down.

"It's Grandfather," Mabel went on. "Come up here to his pillow and ask him how he is!"

By cautiously raising his lashes, he could see Miss Johnson with her best professional manner stationed at the foot of the bed.

"He's weaker this afternoon," she was saying. "He was just dropping off to sleep, I think; and perhaps it would be as well not to stay long."

He could feel Emma bristle and detect the undertone of indignation in her unmodulated voice. When she was aroused, she always returned to the enunciation of her youth.

"And why didn't you send word down?" she demanded.

Jedediah achieved a quavering sigh.

"I am afraid this distresses him—so many people in the room," said the girl firmly.

Mabel essayed to speak.

"Oughtn't we send for the Doctor—" her voice trailed off.

Deeming the time come, Jedediah slowly opened his eyes. "The Doctor—no—don't send for him. The nurse knows—"

"I think I know best, Jedediah," sibilated Emma, compressing her lips and taking a step forward.

"I really can't allow my patient to be excited like this," the girl cut in.

"Yes—I—I think I would like to go to sleep," concurred Jedediah, and let his lids droop.

He could sense their moving toward the door.

"Now say good-bye to Grandfather!" he heard Mabel cajole. And then the

child's treble repeating the words but he pretended not to hear.

"Have they gone?" he inquired after a prudent lapse of time.

The nurse smiled.

### III

AT ten Jedediah asked again what time it was. George had tipped in an hour ago, but he had simulated sleep. All will to talk had left him. To make himself heard required too much of an effort.

Since six he had not even spoken to the watching girl; but his mind was abnormally active despite the lassitude of his body. His eyes, hooded or wide, had not left her for an hour, and now and then he smiled his toothless smile to himself.

As he had said earlier in the day all of his vitality seemed to have moved up into his brain. Strange things had taken lodgement there—things he hadn't thought of for years in just that way.

And once when the girl came close, he was impelled to reach out and sink his fingers in the soft flesh of her arm; but he could not move.

She had come over to take his pulse. After doing this, she went out; and when she came back, began ordering the little table on the other side of the bed.

Jedediah knew why she had gone out when Emma and Mabel and Jenkins, the butler, came trooping in.

Emma dabbed at her protuberant eyes, and Mabel had a still scared look. But in spite of her grief, Emma did not neglect to shoot a hostile look at the nurse.

Jedediah wondered where George was. George ought to be here! And then his son's bulk blocked the doorway.

"What is it?" he asked in an eager voice. "I just got in—"

A little group formed itself at the foot of the bed, Emma and Mabel, with

Miss Johnson just behind. George was by his pillow.

"Doctor King now, sir," Jenkins whispered from the doorway. And the Doctor bustled in and made a hasty examination of Jedediah.

"Have you sent for a clergyman?" he asked in an undertone.

"We're expecting Doctor Maitland at any minute," whispered Emma; and her voice drew Jedediah's eyes to her. They had been on the nurse's slight figure. He had never seen Emma so unmannered! The reflection evoked a feeble smile.

And then his regard returned to the girl; he wondered how much she had divined. Queer, the tumult in his head! Yet he was clear enough.

But from then on, his sight began to fail, a gradual blurring out of all the figures at the foot of the bed.

The clergyman now arrived, and, for the last time, the doctor took Jedediah's pulse.

"He's going now," Jedediah heard him say; but it seemed of little importance. He was thinking how sorry he was that he could no longer see the girl!

And then, for a last instant, he did see her; her throat gleaming pallidly in the semi-gloom behind Emma, and her eyes grave. Some deep-down reserve helped him to a sitting position, and helped him to stretch out his withered, old arms to her. He was conscious of Emma's awed, full face, but was looking beyond her. He tried to frame a word.

Jedediah, when he fell back, was dead.

The tension broken, there was a momentary confusion of moving about, Mabel alone remaining at the foot of the bed, her eyes wide and scared. George led his mother to the door. "And to think," she wailed, "that his last thoughts were of me—that he died holding his arms out to me!"

And Mildred Johnson, busy clearing the litter of bottles off the little table in preparation for the undertaker, smiled.



# The Fifth Bull

By C. E. Bechhofer

## I

THE day before the big bull-fight Don Felipé drove out with his assistants to inspect the bulls, which were coralled in the centre of the public park. The carriage in which he drove was gaily decorated; even the mules had their ribbons and streamers. Don Felipé knew that he was the centre of interest in the city. The little pigtail he wore as a bull-fighter marked him out; but even without this proof of identity, he could boast of being one of the most talked of, most described, and most photographed men in Spain. For weeks before his coming the local papers had been full of stories of his skill, his courage, his enormous gains and his wealth; his photographs had appeared almost daily, and were to be seen pasted upon the walls of the town.

It had been a reflection upon the city and upon those who managed its bull-fights that Don Felipé had never appeared there since his very first appearance as a *torero* ten years before; nobody knew the exact reason why it should be so, but it was a fact that, though he had fought bulls with enormous popular success in nearly every other big city in Spain, he had refused the most advantageous offers to return to this particular place. He seemed to have some peculiar prejudice against it, much to the embarrassment of the authorities, who found it difficult to explain to the townsfolk why this darling of the bull-ring should appear everywhere else, but never before them.

It was not that he was offered insufficient inducement to come; on the contrary, the purse that was to be given to

him and his assistants was one that almost doubled any previous sums disbursed in this way. No, whatever the reason, it must have been something quite personal. There was indeed one paper, a periodical which existed chiefly as a garnerage of gossip, often true, but more often false, which appeared about this time with what it stated was the real reason of Don Felipé's refusal to enter the local bull-ring.

As everybody knew, it said, Don Felipé had passed a considerable part of his youth in the town, and had even made his first appearance as a *torero* there. His young figure, his courage and address, had so impressed a lady in the audience that she had fallen in love with him; and, despite objections of her family, who were as proud as only noble Spaniards can be, she had neither concealed her admiration for him nor hesitated to make his acquaintance in a clandestine manner. What happened after this, the scandalmonger continued, was not known to anyone but Don Felipé himself, the lady and her family; but, he added, Don Felipé had been warned by the lady's kinsfolk that, should he ever appear again in the town some dreadful revenge would be taken on him.

This, the writer claimed, was the cause of Don Felipé's otherwise inexplicable refusal to grace the city's ring with his presence and his skill. The townsfolk read this gossip solemnly and wondered whether there was conceivably some foundation of fact in it, or whether it had been inserted by the people who controlled the bull-ring to give a further spice of interest to the great *tauromachia* of the coming Sunday.

Don Felipé, then, was an object of

extraordinary interest to the crowd which, on foot, on horseback and in carriage, was surrounding the corralled bulls in the park. At last the most famous *torero* of Spain was among them. Never had the city had so legitimate a reason for pride! When he slipped in at the gate of the corral and passed the trained bullocks who were guarding the bulls that were to fight next day a murmur of admiration arose from the people; when one of the huge black bulls turned toward him and bellowed, lowering its sharp, curved horns threateningly, and Don Felipé gazed at it with calm unconcern, the murmur changed to a roar.

One of the attendants, the man who had convoyed the bulls from their home to the city, pointed out to Don Felipé with great deference the points of the six bulls that were to fight the next day. They were all huge, formidable brutes, and Don Felipé looked them over with admiration that was the keener for the absolute confidence that he had in himself as their successful opponent on the morrow. Ten years in the ring warranted him in esteeming himself little less highly than his admirers.

The attendant pointed to the bull that had demonstrated at Don Felipé's entrance.

"He will be the fifth, Don Felipé," he said; "see what strength he has, what legs, what a dewlap, what a giant's back! He is a bull fit for a king, fit for the king of *toreros*, for Don Felipé himself. It will be a battle of giants, Don Felipé, a contest between an elephant and a lion. When at last you take your sword and boldly and delicately step up to him and pierce him to the heart with a single thrust of your sword, and he falls slowly, slowly at our feet, bellowing with his last breath his defiant admiration of you, then, Don Felipé, you will be deafened by the applause of the onlookers. The town is so excited already by your visit that they are selling seats at eight times their price, simply to see the great master. And it will be the fifth bull, this marvel over here, that will bring you glory, still greater glory than you have yet achieved elsewhere."

Don Felipé was used to hearing this adulation of himself and of the bulls he was to fight; but he acknowledged that the fifth bull deserved the admiration of the attendant.

However, he remembered that he had to play the part of a popular hero, and, turning his back upon the bulls with an affectation of indifference, he stalked out of the corral and, mounting his carriage with his assistants, drove rapidly away into the town.

## II

He was not altogether as unconcerned as he made believe to be. The gossiping tale in the local paper had its foundation of truth; and, for all his knowledge of his own national fame and importance, Don Felipé could not help his mind drifting back to the days ten years ago when he had first fought the bulls in this town. In those days, Doña Ines's family would gladly have killed him or hired men to kill him for the shame he had brought upon her. But today, he thought, when ten long years had passed without his entering their city and he was at the height of his glory, they would either have forgotten it, or at least their desire for revenge would have died from sheer inanity.

And yet a curious feeling of danger in the air made him a little uneasy. He was no coward; men who are cowards do not win success as *toreros*; but still he felt this extraordinary misgiving, and it angered him because it distracted his mind from the great business of the next day.

His abstraction attracted the attention of his friend and assistant, Juan, the brave young *chulo* who had waved his purple cloak in the face of so many infuriated bulls that Don Felipé had afterward slain. At Madrid one day, a few years before, Don Felipé had slipped as he approached the bull to give it the death-thrust; he had fallen on his knee and the bull had rushed at him; just as it seemed certain that its horns would enter his body and the spectators would be gratified with the death of the famous

*torero*—a thing to talk about for the rest of their lives—young Juan had rushed out from the side of the ring and, with great skill, had somehow interposed his purple cloth between the bull and its victim and distracted the animal for just a sufficient number of seconds to allow Don Felipé to regain his footing. The *torero* had then motioned to Juan to withdraw, and, approaching the animal with perfect coolness, had slain it with a stroke so magnificently placed that the audience went mad with excitement and emotion and acclaimed him the greatest *espada* who had ever entered the ring.

From this day on Felipé kept Juan with him always and never entered the arena without him. It was a friendship famous throughout Spain.

By reason of this intimacy Juan was able to ask Felipé what ailed him without in the least offending that majestic entertainer of the public.

"Are you thinking of that story which the papers tell of your early life here? Surely that is a fable, Don Felipé?"

"There is much truth in it, Juan; somehow I have never wanted to come back here before. Last week even I was ready to tell them that I would not come here today. But when this president came to me and told me that I should be thought a coward if I did not come, I had not the heart to refuse."

"But who would dare to insult the famous Don Felipé at the moment when he is the greatest and most beloved man in Spain? If those people, whoever they are, have ever really meditated revenge, they must surely have forgotten it by now; they should be proud instead that the great Felipé honored them by noticing one of their family."

Don Felipé was impressed by this argument of Juan's, which indeed confirmed his own thoughts on the matter and his very high opinion of himself.

"Yes, boy," he said at last; "the fifth bull is the most formidable foe I have to face in this town. I spit on the others, bulls and men alike. And yet five years ago I got a strange message handed to me one day, written by one

of the lady's brothers, whom I had known only as a boy of fifteen. He said that he had just been told by his father of what had happened between me and his sister, and that he had taken over the care of the family's honor. I never heard any more, and had almost forgotten it until we arrived here today. But come, don't worry about me, my boy; I have the fifth bull to think of, and that is a far more important matter! How shall I kill him?"

And Don Felipé rehearsed in his mind the various strokes, each more daring than the others, by which he could kill the brute and win the applause of the crowd.

Juan left him and went away to pay a call in the town, where he had friends. He came back soon after nightfall and found Don Felipé already in bed, sleeping as calmly as if he was not to risk his life on the morrow in the arena. Dispersed around the room were numerous bouquets which had been sent to him by some of his more ardent women admirers. But, after all, why should Don Felipé worry about the next day? Had he not slain hundreds of bulls in his time, with a skill that had never been surpassed in the history of the ring?

### III

LIFE flowed only in one direction on that Sunday afternoon. All the shops were closed, and the streets were full of the crowd that was hurrying out on foot and in every kind of conveyance to the bull-ring.

Everywhere one heard the name of Don Felipé and tales of his prowess and his popularity and the enormous sums that he received for his art. The connoisseurs also spoke highly of the bulls, especially of the giant which was to provide the fifth fight. They knew that this would be the great moment of the afternoon's entertainment.

The sun blazed down upon the great ring, already crowded an hour before the commencement of the spectacle. Half the ring was in the shade, and here the richer portion of the town was



assembled, together with the foreigners who had come to see the great *torero*, conspicuous among these being an Englishman in the front row, who was whispered to be a high official from Gibraltar. There were many women, most of them plainly dressed, but a few swathed in the lovely shawls of their country, whose great embroidered flowers gave an additional color to the scene.

In the other half of the amphitheatre, the sunny part, where the cheap seats were, there was a vast concourse of the common people. They were a sea of movement; both men and women were dressed more gaily than the rich people opposite, and they showed more life, more lack of restraint, more picturesqueness in every way. The roar of voices was deafening; but above the noise one could hear the shouts of "Agua! Agua!" which called the water-sellers with their pots and cups. Men stood up to look at the others; late-comers pushed their way along the rows of stone seats. There is no scene in the world so animated as a bull-ring before the fight begins.

Suddenly there was a momentary hush as the President, the master of the ceremonies, entered his box. The band struck up a lively march and, as everybody sat down, one of the gates of the arena was opened and the cavalcade entered.

At the head were officials on horseback, clad in dignified mediæval dress. Behind on foot came Don Felipe and his understudies, followed by others of the participants, gorgeously clad in their traditional costume—short jackets of satin embroidered with gold and silver, short breeches, light-colored silk stockings and black pumps.

Don Felipe bowed to the President and the spectators, who greeted him with a roar of applause. Behind him rode the *picadores*, also finely dressed and with heavy armor on their legs to protect them from the bulls' horns. Also one saw Juan and the other *chulos*, the cloakmen, with their cloaks of purple, scarlet and vermillion, in the procession, that wonderful picture of older times.

The bull-fighters formed before the

President, who gave the order to begin. The mounted officials left the ring; the *chulos* flung their cloaks over the barrier, making a glorious splash of color; and Don Felipe stood proudly in front of the President's box, waiting impassively until the time should come for him to meet the bull single-handed.

The *picadores* on their emaciated old hacks—the horses which are used in the ring are old and diseased, far beyond any other use—ranged themselves round the ring, with their lances ready to meet the onslaught of the bull.

Then the gate facing the President was flung open and, with a bellow, the first bull came rushing into the arena.

Quick as thought it rushed at the first *picador* in sight and drove its horns to the roots into the miserable horse's flanks. The *picador* on its back drove his lance, with its meagre two inches of steel, into the bull's shoulder, making a wound from which the scarlet blood flowed over the animal's black back. But horse and man were overthrown by the violence of the bull's onrush, and Juan and the other *chulos* ran up waving their cloaks to draw the beast away in another direction. As it turned and gave chase to them, they vaulted lightly over the barrier into the narrow corridor which runs between the arena and the spectators and which was occupied only by a few policemen in tight black clothes and white helmets and a few privileged spectators and attendants.

Meanwhile men had run into the ring through several openings that are made to admit them, but are too narrow to allow the bull to pass, and were dragging out the fallen *picador* from under his horse, his armor being too heavy to allow him to rise alone. The poor horse lay hardly moving. Whether the brutes are drugged, as some say, or whether they are simply past feeling pain, it is at least a fact that they never make a sound when the bull gores them. They are blindfolded only on one side; yet even when they see the bull rushing at them, barely a quiver betrays their fear. This horse was dying, and in a few moments it was still, even before the

*picador* had time to mount another victim and re-enter the ring.

But already the bull had had time to attack two other horses. The *picadores* had each pierced it as it charged, and it carried the marks of their spears on its back. One *picador* had clung to the barrier as the bull drew off, and had climbed over it with difficulty as his horse dropped to the ground. But the third horse was still upon its legs and was running round the ring with its rider still mounted and with a great wound in its side.

The bull saw it and rushed at it again; once more its horns entered its flanks with a loud impact. This time the bull raised it and its rider clean off the ground, then, dropping it, it gored it again and again.

With difficulty the cloakmen succeeded in enticing the infuriated brute away. The *picador* also had been slightly gored, and he was carried out, pale and motionless, by half a dozen of the attendants. The bull, still too fresh for the next part of the performance to take place, tore round the arena attacking the bodies of the horses it had already slain. At last it saw another *picador* waiting; as it approached, the horse turned away and the bull passed by without attacking it.

The same thing happened again; but this time two or three attendants entered the ring and, one holding the horse's bridle, another its tail, and the others pressing against it and hitting it with sticks to hold it broadside on for the bull's assault, they waited the coming of the bull. This time it charged straight at the doomed brute and, as its horns struck in and up its side, the attendants rushed for the barrier and escaped.

The audience cheered to see the bull tearing at the horse with its thrusts, and proud fathers lifted up their babies with a "Houp! Holla!" that they, too, might enjoy the fun. The bull was now a little wearied with slaughter, and it stood in the middle of the ring bellowing. A trumpet shrilled out, and the surviving horses and their *picadores* left the ring.

The moment for the *banderilleros*, the dart-throwers, had come.

A *banderillero*, holding in each hand a short dart, gay with blue paper ornaments, walked lightly toward the bull. Two or three *chulos* waved their cloaks to draw the brute round; and as it rushed toward them they ran for the barrier and escaped, sometimes only just in time to miss the angry horns. At last the *banderillero* saw his chance, and with wide-stretched arms—for his darts must pass outside the bull's horns into its shoulders—he let fly.

The darts quivered in the bull's shoulders, one on each side, and a roar of applause rang out as the *banderillero* ran for his life to the barrier, pursued by the bull which, however, was easily distracted by the waving of the cloak of one of the *chulos*.

The bull stopped dead, tossed its head and roared piteously. All the fury had gone out of it, even the blind cruelty of nature that had made it rush at the miserable horses and gore them. But the bull-ring is armed against this mischance, and the next *banderillero* approached the bull with a pair of darts that cracked ominously as he hurled them. As soon as they struck into the bull's shoulders, they smoked and the powder in them went off in a series of explosions.

The bull bellowed with surprise and fury, tossed its head and flanks, and rushed madly at one of the dead horses and gored it again. But the *chulos* came up to head it off and for a few minutes it chased them vainly across the arena, no sooner coming close to one than another would draw off its attention with a skilful wave of his brightly colored cloak. The President gave a signal and the trumpet blared as Don Felipé, greeted with a roar of applause, stepped forward to perform the crowning act of the fight.

#### IV

How dignified he looked as he stepped toward the bull—agile, lithe, bare-headed, completely confident of his own

ability. In his left hand he held a small red cloak; in his right the short, thin sword of the *espada*. He flung the cloak over the sword and waved it in the bull's face.

The brute rushed at him, and very swiftly he raised the sword and the cloak over its head; the bull passed him, stopped short, and then, turning sharply, was back on him. But again he raised the cloak just to clear the brute's horns; and the two combatants were back in their first position, while a shout of applause greeted the graceful act. Again he made the brute rush past him and return to its place before him.

The bull bellowed with rage, but Don Felipé was as calm as when he had first stepped out to meet it. Three times he played with the bull in this manner; then, with a swift, birdlike leap he reached over its head and from between its vicious horns, he planted the sword in the middle of its neck. Then, with a supreme gesture, he stood a pace in front of the animal, stretching out his arm toward it.

One waited to see the bull spring at him and toss him to his death; but instead the brute slowly sank on its knees, as if obeying the command of his hand; a few seconds later, it dropped full to the ground, dead.

It was a perfect kill; the skill of the thrust and the grace of Don Felipé's gesture were magnificent, unsurpassable. The audience stood up and cheered wildly. The President, whom Don Felipé had made the dying bull face, led the applause. Then with a bow to him Don Felipé, picking up his three-cornered hat and carrying it in his hand, went round the ring with little runs of a few steps each time, bowing gracefully.

Each section of the audience, as he approached it, yelled its admiration of his perfect performance. A gate of the arena opened and, driven by three men with cracking whips, a team of four speedy mules, gaily decorated and covered with tinkling bells, galloped in and dragged out the corpse of the bull,

returning for the bodies of the dead horses. The band struck up a triumphant march; and, when Don Felipé had finished his round of the arena, from which meanwhile the attendants were brushing the traces of the conflict, the other gate opened and a second bull rushed in.

Again the horses were ridden and pushed to their death; again the *banderilleros* stamped at the bull and taunted it until it rushed at them and they hurled their darts into its shoulders. This time, however, Don Felipé allowed his understudy to perform the last act of the killing; but this *espada* had not Felipé's skill, and his gesture to the dying bull was wasted, since the bull, instead of dying at his feet rushed at him with the sword extending from its neck. The stroke had gone awry and had not penetrated the heart.

The crowd whistled its contempt for the new *espada*, who walked cursing to the side of the arena to fetch another sword while the cloakmen distracted the brute's attention. Again he struck, and again the stroke failed to kill the bull. This time the crowd howled with rage and were not appeased until, the bull falling on its knees with weakness, a man climbed on its back and killed it with a dagger thrust in the spinal cord. There was no triumphal circle of the ring for the *espada* after this, and he retired pale with rage to where Don Felipé the inimitable, stood conscious of his own prowess.

The third bull Don Felipé killed as cleverly as the first.

Once more the audience rose at him, and he circled the arena still more proudly than before. As he came to the sunny benches opposite the President's box, something seemed to hold him.

He stopped dead, and looked in one direction. He stopped, stared, went on a step, and then was seen to stop again and look back fixedly at the people in the front row of the seats.

Everybody's curiosity was aroused;

besides, this was holding up the entrance of the next bull.

The audience turned as one man to where the *torero* stood gazing. They saw a woman, dressed all in white, rise up in her seat and cry something to Don Felipé. At first it seemed that he would fall; then he made as if to reply to her, but remembering himself, he drew himself up with a mocking bow to the woman, he ran on to the next section of the audience, which applauded him the more readily for his composure.

A buzz of conversation arose; everybody suddenly remembered the gossip in the paper and wondered if this was an echo of it; but then, reasoned the wiser among them, would a lady of a distinguished family be sitting in the cheap, sunny seats? The woman had thrown her mantilla over her face again, and they could not distinguish her features.

When Don Felipé returned to his place in the shade, beneath the President's box, the ring was ready for the next bull, and he was able to rest and think.

So Doña Ines was still alive, and still determined upon revenge! He had not expected this; the affair, he had thought, was buried in the past. The faithful Juan, ignoring the other performers in the ring, who were busy with the fourth bull, approached and conferred with him sympathetically. The spectators were too much occupied with the baiting of the new bull to care any longer what they did or said.

"Is she the woman, Don Felipé?" asked Juan.

"Yes, Juan, it is she. I ought not to have returned here; I feel that I have been foolish to come back."

"What danger can there be?—Ah, be careful."

The bull had come close to them and a general shout of warning made them vault over the barriers into the safe corridor behind. And there they continued their conversation, Juan trying to compose Don Felipé's agitation.

The fourth bull was weak; it fell

on its knees twice in the middle of the ring and refused even to attack more than one of the horses that was being held in its path. Hisses and hoots rose from the disgusted audience. The *bandilleros* and the cloakmen shrugged their shoulders in disgust at the brute that they were expected to fight. The trumpet ordered the *picadores* out of the ring; but not even the fiery darts could excite the poor beast.

The audience stood up and faced the President's box, shouting insults. They started to throw their cushions into the ring; one angry man hurled a bottle at the bull, which stood stock still, bellowing for its liberty. Then everybody started to clap hands in time and to shout still more loudly.

At last the President made a signal, and the door to the stables opened to admit two trained bullocks, which were to lead away the useless bull. They wandered round him, with their great bells clanging; tamely the bull stepped between them, and in a few minutes the three animals left the ring, followed by a pandemonium of howls, hisses and whistles. The President was soundly hooted for allowing such a beast to enter the ring, and he could be seen mopping his face with fright at the anger of the mob.

But now the trumpet rang out again.

This time everybody knew that there would be real sport, for it was to be the fifth bull, the finest of the whole herd. And, indeed, when it dashed bellowing into the ring, pawed the sand, and immediately rushed down upon the nearest horse and gored it in the flank, the crowd cheered with delight.

This was a bull indeed! The President smiled as he leaned back in his chair, for he knew that no one would remember the fiasco of the previous bull. The bull killed four horses in as many minutes; then, rushing at the bull-fighters who were waiting their turn at the far end of the arena, it sent them all jumping for their lives across the barrier.

But even this was hardly enough for safety, for the next minute the bull

threw itself at the barrier, which was quite six feet high, and fell across it into the corridor at the back. It rushed down this passage to the confusion of the men who were standing there; however, it was soon diverted through an open gate back into the ring. It killed three more horses before the President gave the signal for the next sortie.

Then the *banderilleros* had a hard time planting their darts in its flanks; one of them succeeded in fixing only one of his darts, and the crowd yelled derision at him. But this part of the combat also came to an end; and Don Felipé, with his red cloak draped on his sword, walked calmly out to meet the still untired bull, his faithful Juan in attendance.

Several times Juan waved his cloak in the bull's face and each time he had scarcely time to vault out of its way over the barrier, even though the other cloakmen did their best to divert the brute's attention. Once the bull, disregarding the waving cloaks, made straight for Don Felipé as if recognizing in him its chief antagonist. Felipé taken by surprise, evaded the rush in a manner that annoyed the crowd by its lack of grace; the *torero's* pride was wounded, and to show the mettle he was made of, he twice received the bull on his knees, each time only just being missed by the angry horns. The audience was restored to good humor by this feat, and Felipé was correspondingly enheartened.

And now at last came the critical moment, when Don Felipé was to give the bull the final thrust.

Closely followed by Juan, who motioned away the other cloakmen, he walked on his toes toward it. He drew it on with his cloak and dodged it neatly both in its onward rush and its swift return. Then he held his sword upright and pointed it toward the bull, showing that he was about to run upon it and kill it. He started to run, when suddenly a gleam of reflected sunlight, reflected from nobody knew where, fell across his face. He was

blinded for the moment and raised his left hand, still grasping the red cloak, to shield his eyes. But at this moment the bull, infuriated by his approach and by the red cloth in his hand, dashed upon him and thrust its lowered horns full into his body.

Don Felipé fell to the ground, turning ever so slightly toward Juan, whose part it was at such a perilous moment to race in and draw away the bull's attention. But Juan was standing still, gazing with a smile in the direction whence the shaft of light had shone for that fatal moment.

Only he perhaps of all the thousands there had seen Doña Ines take her mirror in her hand and focus the reflection of the scorching sun into Don Felipé's face.

Other cloakmen rushed forward to the defence of Don Felipé, but Juan's hesitation had already allowed the bull to gore him again. When now they enticed the bull away and the attendants ran in to carry Don Felipé off to the hospital of the arena, it was easy to see from their faces that he was terribly hurt.

Don Felipé's understudy stepped forward to take his place.

The audience, delighted at the new sensation, madly applauded the bull; Don Felipé's wounds might be fatal, but at that moment their sympathy was not for the man but for his conqueror.

This the wounded *torero* dimly realized as they carried him in his agony out of the ring. The doctor was waiting, but a moment was enough for him to beckon the attendant priest.

"He has not five minutes to live," the doctor whispered to Juan.

Don Felipé's eyes slowly opened, and his quick gaze understood the doctor's meaning.

"Where is Juan?" he said with difficulty.

The doctor withdrew and detained the incoming priest for a moment at the door to allow Don Felipé to speak to Juan alone.

"Juan," said Don Felipé in a low voice, "it was that woman who made



me slip. It was Doña Ines. She blinded me with her mirror."

"I know," said Juan.

"But, Juan, had you run forward when I fell, I should have escaped. The bull did not wound me much the first time. Why did you stand still?"

Juan looked down at him with a cruel glance.

"Doña Ines is my sister, Don Felipé," he whispered. "You smirched our honor. We have taken our revenge!"

Then, before the doctor and the priest could interfere, Juan spat in Don Felipé's upturned face and slowly, heavily pressed his hand in the dying man's distorted features.



## Song

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

*A WIND came out of the South.  
Soft on the leaves it stirred—  
And in my heart it awakened  
A lovely word.*

*Mary—and yet again  
Mary, and that was all . . .  
It will be my answer to cold winds  
When the leaves fall!*



**W**AR: Combat based upon the theory that if I murder you I shall thenceforth be filled with electricity, but that if we murder them I shall thenceforth be filled with medals.



**S**IGN for a modern barroom: "If you don't see what you want, ask for it."



**O**NE woman is the largest audience that a man seeks.



# The Far-seeing Skeptics

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

[Author of "This Side of Paradise," etc.]

ONCE upon a time all the men of mind and genius in the world became of one belief—that is to say, of no belief. But it wearied them to think that within a few years after their death many cults and systems and prognostications would be ascribed to them which they had never meditated nor intended. So they said to one another:

*"Let's join together and make a great book that will last forever to mock the credulity of man. Let's persuade our most erotic poets to write about the delights of the flesh, and induce some of our robust journalists to contribute bawdy stories of famous amours. We'll include all the most preposterous old wives' tales now current. We'll choose the keenest satirist alive to compile a godalmighty from all the godalmighties worshipped by mankind, a godalmighty who will be so exaggerated, and yet so*

*weakly human, that he'll become a simile for silly the world over—and in addition we'll ascribe to him all sorts of jokes and vanities and rages in which he'll be supposed to indulge for his own diversion, so that the people will read our book and chuckle and there'll be no more nonsense in the world.*

*"Finally, let us take care that the book possesses all the virtues of style, so that it may last forever as a witness to our profound skepticism and our universal irony."*

So the men did, and they died.

But the book lived always, so beautifully had it been written and so astounding the quality of imagination with which these men of mind and genius had endowed it. They had neglected to give it a name, but after they were dead it became known as the Bible.



A LOVE affair has four stages. In the first stage, or incubation, the participants regard their condition as something exceedingly bewildering; in the second stage, or aggravation, as something exceedingly sensual; in the third stage, or crisis, as something exceedingly spiritual; and in the fourth stage, or convalescence, as something exceedingly asinine.



# The Story of Julia Newton

*By Thyra Samter Winslow*

## I

WHEN Julia Newton was twenty-nine years old and had five years of fairly smooth matrimonial performance to her credit, she began to grow tired of her husband, Bert Newton, and of Morrilton, Ohio.

Not that Julia had ever been too fond of either her husband or her home town. She knew that Morrilton was an abode of yokels. Whenever she read the magazines that carried pictorial supplements of metropolitan stage favorites she felt that her rightful place had been withheld from her; that she should be with these acknowledged beauties.

Fate had played a trick on her. She should have been born rich, or at least where riches could be gained in exchange for such gifts as were doubtless hers. But she had been born in Morrilton and her father was a bookkeeper for a shoe store. She had never known how to escape Morrilton. She had dreamed of escaping, of course. Until she was twenty-three she had expected some miracle to happen. When it didn't, she felt cheated. At intervals, when she was introspective and "came to herself," she couldn't believe that she was really grown-up and unattached and in Morrilton.

When Julia was twenty-three she found that most of the girls in her crowd were getting married. Julia had never attained to the more exclusive "society crowd" of the town, led by the banker's son and the lawyer's daughter. Hers was a more modest set of smaller tradespeople, but they had good times

in their way—parties and dances and the movies. Julia thought, for a time, that some man in the other crowd, attracted by her beauty, would lift her above her friends. But when she had not achieved matrimony at twenty-three, despite several earnest efforts, she began to get flurried and cast about recklessly.

She had not had any love affairs of much consequence. At sixteen, she had gone to parties with Jim Richards, who had kissed her one night on the way home. Now Jim Richards was married and living in Chicago. At twenty, she had been enamoured of Carlton Douglas, the leading man in the theatrical stock company at Electric Park. She had met Douglas and had done all she could to attract him, had written him notes and telephoned him, but Douglas had not paid the slightest attention to her. Then she had flirted with commercial travelers who "made" Morrilton and who were always being brought to parties by business acquaintances. A number of these drummers had made love to her; even kissed her. One or two had said things she considered fresh, though "she knew how to take care of herself," and "called them down," so that they made no further advances. But all of these things, though diverting, did not lead to pleasantly serious consequences. When she was twenty-three, her father hinted that unless she married soon, she had better get a job of some kind. Julia was lazy. Regular hours in an office, and especially in an office where there were no desirable young men, did not appeal to her. She could not find employment

that combined the business of earning money with the business of getting married, so she remained unemployed.

Julia went to parties with all of the unattached men of her crowd. She was considered a good sport, always ready for amusement. She was pretty, then, a trifle too tall, perhaps, to suit the average man, but her height was not noticeable enough to be detrimental to her chances. She had regular features, a straight nose, pleasant grey eyes, a rather small mouth. She was slender, though a bit generously built in the hips and with rather large hands and feet. She was not at all a bad-looking girl, even by standards more rigid than those of Morrilton.

It was rather surprising that she hadn't married earlier. Both her sisters had achieved matrimony in their early twenties. Perhaps Julia unconsciously repulsed men that other girls of her set would have regarded as desirable. Anyhow, at twenty-three, she grew frightened. Maybe it was a certain desperateness that made her choose Bert Newton, who, up to that time, had remained unmolested.

Bert Newton was a likable enough chap, three years Julia's senior. He worked for a wholesale grocery company and was considered an up-and-coming young man. In appearance he was a bit unprepossessing. He walked with a rather shambling gait and was rather short. He was pale, with light eyes and almost unnoticeable eyebrows and lashes. His hands were always a bit red and moist. He was not the ideal lover.

Bert got a fair salary and was generous. He had frequently taken Julia to various places of amusement. It was not until long after Julia had decided to capture him that Bert became aware of the proceedings. Then, though he was frightened at first at the thought of matrimony, it seemed to him that he fell in love with Julia and that he himself carried on the courtship. Julia even persuaded herself that she was in love with Bert. After all, he was as nice as any man in the crowd. When

he made love to her in his diffident, inexperienced way she responded quite sincerely. She dressed and arranged her hair with great care when she was going to see him, and one day, when he was late for an engagement, she felt quite a thrill of anxiety.

They were married just after Julia was twenty-four and went to house-keeping in a rented house. Then they built a five-room bungalow, which they occupied from that time.

## II

It was as good looking a home as that owned by any of their friends. It was of the too-heavy roof variety, of brown shingles with an open porch in front. Inside it was conventional and, to Julia, quite pleasing. There was a three-piece mahogany set, upholstered in blue velour, in the living room. The rug was of a faintly imitative Chinese pattern. There were several odd chairs, an upright piano, a smoking stand of mahogany, an oblong mahogany table, a lamp with a yellow silk shade. Julia had made the shade herself. On the walls were framed photographs of her sisters' children, a water-color made by one of her friends, a "fancy" picture of a boy holding a dog, and the framed head of a girl, a former cover design of one of the sensational magazines.

The dining-room was overflowing with a complete set, which Julia proudly called "Chippendale period." The two bedrooms, one occupied by Julia and Bert, the other kept as a guest-room and seldom occupied, were furnished with brass beds and pieces of mahogany and oak. The kitchen and the one bath were of white enamel. It was a house any woman might well be proud of, Julia thought, and, while she would have preferred one of the more pretentious places out on Rock Road which should by right have been hers, she never really objected to the material things that circumstances provided for her.

Julia was quite happy with Bert for

the first years of her married life. She definitely took her place as one of the young matrons of her crowd and "settled down." She felt smug, as if she had really accomplished something. It was comfortable not to have to pretend indifference to men and to matrimony, not to have to wonder if there were the possibilities of not getting a man at all and preparing for the contingency. Here she was, married, with a home of her own and a man who made a nice living and came home every night to dinner.

Bert was all Julia could have asked in a husband. In a husband of Bert's type, that is. He was utterly patient. If he came home before dinner was ready, he would sit around in his awkward, rather dull way and never think of complaining. At the least encouragement he would burst forth into long stories of what he had done during the day. While he lacked all originality, he had a good memory and could repeat things he had read and conversations he had heard.

Bert did not interest Julia much, though she was fond of him. She listened when he talked, talked to him in turn. But there was really nothing vital about him that reached out to her. She would have mourned sincerely if he had died, even while she would have wondered how his going could make such little real difference to her. Bert did not die. He continued coming home to dinner with tiresome regularity.

While Julia's life was governed outwardly by Bert, by his leaving in the morning, the necessity of getting breakfast for him, his return home at night, her own life went on quite outside of his. Bert didn't come home to lunch, as so many men did in Morrilton. Julia was glad of that. Three meals a day would have been too much. Two seemed tiresome enough and Julia was glad when her mother or her sisters asked her to take a meal with them, even if it did mean having them to dinner in return. Julia did as little work as possible. A Mrs. Grey, whom Julia always spoke of as "the woman," came

in one day each week, spending the morning in washing and the afternoon in cleaning and ironing. Outside of a little really necessary cleaning, Julia did not do much to the house the rest of the week.

Her days were simple. The alarm clock sounded at seven and Bert rose, grumblingly, at its first ring. Julia got up a little after Bert. She put on an always half-soiled house-dress and, after giving her face the merest sort of a dab, went into the kitchen and prepared breakfast, which was never more than fruit and cereal and toast. The Newtons breakfasted in the kitchen.

Bert ate hurriedly, kissed Julia and disappeared for the day. His work necessitated a ride on the street car.

As soon as he was out of the way, Julia would sit down in her favorite chair, the larger chair in the three-piece set and spend half an hour over the local newspaper or any of the new lighter books of fiction. Usually, before she put her book down, one of her women friends would telephone and make an engagement for the afternoon. Although Julia would see this same woman in a few hours and there was nothing of importance to discuss, they would spend half an hour at the telephone, talking about Bert's cold or Richard's sore finger or what to have for dinner and why prices were higher at one butcher shop than another. Perhaps three telephone conversations made up Julia's morning. She washed dishes then, made the one bed, dusted perfunctorily and sat down to rest, usually with a magazine or a book. Julia read perhaps half a dozen magazines during the month, keeping up with at least twice that many serial stories. She thought of herself as rather a literary person and looked down on Bert because he confined his reading to a morning and an evening newspaper and to the articles and the advertisements in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Between twelve and one o'clock Julia telephoned to the grocery and meat market for supplies for the day,



unless she knew the afternoon's adventures would take her in the neighborhood of these shops. She preferred visiting them in person, not because she could save money by making her own purchases, but because she liked carrying on jocular conversations with the men who served her, telling them to "be sure and send me the best" and "it certainly is awful the way you put things over on me. Half of those last green beans—"

Lunch, then. Julia was far too indolent to prepare a proper meal when she was alone. The day "the woman" was there, she begrudgingly cooked meat and potatoes, complaining later to her friends of her helper's enormous appetite. Other days Julia gathered from the ice-box bits of cold meat or half a tomato or a cold potato, usually mixing these remnants of yesterday's dinner into a salad by the addition of a lettuce leaf and a spoonful of bottled salad dressing.

Lunch over, Julia dressed for the afternoon. She made a rather careful toilet. The last year or two she had gone in for silk underthings, saying, though she knew it was far from the truth, that they really were cheaper than cotton in the end, if you washed them yourself. Julia did wash hers herself in the washstand in the bathroom and usually there were a couple of things, a vest or a pair of bloomers or a pair of stockings, hanging over the tub to dry.

Julia wore ready-made clothes, shoes with too-high heels, and rather impossible hats. Afternoons, after she was dressed, she went to meet "the girls" or waited at home, doing necessary mending or darning, until they called for her. Several of her women acquaintances drove their own cars, small touring cars of inexpensive make. Sometimes the afternoons were spent driving aimlessly up one street and down another. Sometimes Julia spent the afternoon at the home of one of her friends in a similar small bungalow different only in the color of the velour furniture of the living-room and

the lamp shade from her own. They would play bridge or gossip. At five there was ice cream and cake or a luncheon of canned salmon, cheese and bread and butter or other easily prepared things. Sometimes a group of them went to the movies, drinking in the banal romances of the screen in a poorly ventilated place that had once been a store. The elaborate moving picture theatre had not yet come to Morrilton.

Just before six Julia would go home, her purchases for the evening meal under her arm, more than likely, unless she and Bert were dining with relatives. Back at home she would take off her finery of the afternoon and substitute a house-dress. Bert never saw Julia in her best things unless they were going out or expected guests. At home, with him, she was either in a house-dress or a kimono.

Julia would hurry in preparing dinner so as to have things ready when Bert got home, though things seldom were ready. Bert would come in, quietly, put his hat in the hall closet and go back into the kitchen. With his evening paper, he would sit, not very comfortably, at the kitchen table and talk over the day's events or read short news stories. Sometimes Julia would ask him to assist her in preparing the evening meal. Bert did things awkwardly. He moved slowly. But he always handed Julia the dish out of the ice-box or sliced the bread or arranged the cold meat on a platter.

After dinner the two of them would go into the living-room and talk, aimlessly, about nothing at all. Bert would read his paper or the *Saturday Evening Post*, which always lasted him until Tuesday, at least, and Julia would again attack her book of fiction. When they were alone Julia would fall asleep at nine and Bert would nod half an hour later and at ten, grumbling because they had dozed, they would move off to bed. Half of the time guests would come in or they would go visiting, seeing the same women whom Julia had been with during the afternoon and

the men whom Bert had talked with during business hours.

On Sunday they would sleep late and have a more leisurely breakfast, enhanced by reheated grocery buns or ham and eggs. They would read the Sunday papers. Bert preferred those from a nearby large city, while Julia devoured every word in the Society Column of the *Morrilton Daily News*, where, indeed, she often found her own name about halfway down the column, the discovery of which was always a new delight to her.

When theatrical companies came to Morrilton, she and Bert and the rest of their crowd attended the performances. There were parties, too, usually on Saturday night, so that they might sleep late the next morning. Each couple of the crowd gave perhaps one or two parties a year. There was gossip, too, and scandals, an undercurrent of ugly, unconfirmed rumor. Altogether, Julia's days ran along smoothly. As she often remarked to her friends, "we don't have such bad times here in Morrilton."

### III

THINGS went along like this until Julia was nearly thirty and had been married for five years. Then she discovered that this wasn't all she wanted out of life. Not nearly all. Where were the dreams of her girlhood? She wanted some sort of adventure. Of course she was married and had a nice home and a good husband. She was used to those things. She wanted more. Love, maybe. She was sick of what she had. Was this living?

So she was quite ready for Chester Allen when he came to Morrilton. Allen was a commercial traveler. He sold an advertised brand of men's clothing. He was a third cousin of Vernon Sims, who was the husband of one of Julia's best friends. He was a mild, pleasant fellow, not at all the usual commercial traveler.

Julia met Chester Allen at the Sims's, on his first trip to Morrilton. He had

recently been transferred from a west coast territory. Because Julia was completely out of love with Bert, if she could be said to have ever been in love with him, it was easy enough for her to fall in love with Allen. At that first meeting she thought of him as a rather pleasant, amusing young man. She saw him twice more on his first visit in Morrilton, and, though she enjoyed talking to him, she did not give him much serious thought.

Allen's business route was arranged so that he visited Morrilton for several days every two months or so. It was not until his second visit that Julia took him seriously.

One night Vivian Sims telephoned to ask Julia and Bert to come over to her house. Bert had a headache.

"You come, then," pleaded Vivian. "No use you staying home with him. It isn't as if you could help in any way. We'll take you home. Chester Allen is in town and he's here, too. We can have a table of bridge without Bert."

Julia did not often spend an evening without her husband but she went to the Sims's. Instead of bridge the Simses and Allen and she talked. Somehow, she found herself growing strangely clever, more like she had been in her gayer moments as a girl. She and Allen did most of the talking, exchanging rather saucy repartee. Then Allen played for them. He played the piano by ear and rather badly, but he knew all of the metropolitan favorites that had not reached Morrilton and he sang in a pleasant, untrained voice. When it was time for her to go home, Allen asked to escort her. Walking home with him it came to Julia that this was the first time she had walked alone with a man, except Bert, since her marriage. It seemed awfully pleasant. Allen was a nice fellow, quiet, but with a sense of humor.

She saw him the next night at the Burnhams's. Several times during the evening she met his eyes, quite unconsciously, when something amusing was said. He was nice. An awfully fine

fellow. If she'd only married a man more like him! But, at that, after Allen had left Morrilton, Julia thought of him only occasionally.

On his next trip, Julia had occasion to think more about Allen. The Simses called, his first evening in town, and he came with them. The next day Julia was downtown alone and met Allen near his hotel quite by accident and he walked home with her.

They spent perhaps an hour together. Allen played and sang and then sat beside Julia on the blue davenport.

"This is something like it," he said. "I tell you, a traveling man doesn't get much home life. That's where we miss out. Here today and gone tomorrow. No wonder we envy the fellow that's got a home of his own."

"You wouldn't if you saw enough of home life," said Julia. "It's the same every day. Nothing ever happens. Nothing—"

"Nothing?" asked Allen. "What do you want to happen?"

Julia looked at him. He was sitting quite close to her. In that instant it came to Julia that something was about to happen—was happening. Her heart was beating rather rapidly. Why—she was in love with Chester Allen! Not really in love with him, of course. Well, almost in love. Maybe he would kiss her!

Allen did not kiss her. They talked, sitting there on the couch, until it was nearly time for Bert to get home. She told him about herself, how misunderstood and lonely she was. She listened interestedly to his stories. It came to Julia that Allen had peculiar ideas about women. He almost put them on a pedestal. She was surprised at his behavior. In the stories other women told about drummers they always kissed you or tried to kiss you at the first possible opportunity. Here Allen hadn't even tried. Yet he was a city man, knew lots of things. Didn't he care enough for her to kiss her, even?

Julia was so excited as she prepared dinner that it took all of her will power to set the table, to peel potatoes, to

turn down the gas under them when they boiled. When Bert came home she wondered if he noticed anything unusual about her. She tried her best to seem interested in his stories of the office. She even told him, offhand, about meeting Allen, that Allen walked home with her. That was all there was to tell, anyhow.

Julia was glad when bed-time came, so she could stop trying to feign an interest in Bert, so she could think of Allen. Bert was such a bore! She wondered if Allen could care for her at all. Not that it could possibly make any difference, of course. She was a married woman. Still, he was nice. To think that this could happen to her, right in Morrilton, that she could—well, care, for another man. She couldn't really be untrue to Bert. But, after all, nothing had happened, probably wouldn't happen. She hadn't been untrue to Bert in any way. Chester Allen! Of course, it really wasn't love. It was just that he interested her. Couldn't a woman have a platonic friend?

She visualized Allen as she fell asleep. Some women mightn't call him handsome, but he was the type she liked. Dark hair and eyes. Not washed-out and colorless, like Bert. Of course he'd telephone her in the morning—

Allen did not telephone her. She did not see him during the rest of his stay in Morrilton. She thought of him rather feverishly during his two months' absence. When she heard from Vivian Sims that he was to be in town a few days, she grew a bit hysterical, bought a new hat, cleaned a couple of dresses. Yes, she was in love, really in love with him, after all.

#### IV

SHE saw Allen his first day in town. She passed the hotel half a dozen times. She knew he was having dinner with the Simses. She thought of something she just had to tell Vivian, so she persuaded Bert to walk over with her in

the evening. She could tell that Allen was glad to see her.

"Won't you telephone me in the morning?" she managed to say to him before she left.

He telephoned in the morning. She explained, as well as she could, that she usually didn't do things like that but that she did want to talk with him. He told her that he quite understood. She asked him to come to see her. He called that afternoon at four.

They talked for a couple of hours. Julia found herself more and more in love with Allen. He wasn't fresh, either, like the drummers other women had adventures with. He didn't even try to hold her hand. She was a bit disappointed, yet a bit pleased, too. If he had tried to start something she felt she would have had to discourage him. Now, she charmed him in every way she knew, using forgotten tricks and all of the allurements she had read about in books and magazines. He asked to call the next day.

At four o'clock she was dressed, waiting for him. Again they sat together on the blue velour couch. Quite close. Yet, when Julia moved a little nearer it almost seemed that Allen moved away. Yet he was fond of her. He had even brought her a box of candy. Julia wanted to touch him, to have him put his arms around her. She put out her hand, touched his arm.

That started him. Julia drew a deep breath. So he did care. She could tell by his face. He took one of her hands in his. An instant more and his arms were around her. She felt the rough cloth of his coat against her face. He was pressing his lips close against hers. She closed her eyes in satisfaction. This was something like it. Allen was telling her he loved her!

"I—I was afraid of this from the first," he was saying. "I tried to keep away from you. You must have known that I—I loved you. I didn't want this to happen, unless I could have you, take you away. Now you must go away with me. I'll make you happy. I didn't want just an ordinary flirtation

with you. You're married. Yet—I knew this would come."

Julia didn't quite understand. Why, the man was burying his face in his hands, crying almost. That wasn't the way she had thought he would act. She pulled one of his hands away from his face.

"Don't do that," she said, gently. "I—I do care. I do. There isn't anything to feel so bad about."

She was in his arms again. It gave her a beautifully excited feeling, a thrill she hadn't had in a long time.

Allen was telling her about himself. He had supported his mother until her death two years ago. He had never had any other home: "no house is big enough for a wife and a mother-in-law." He couldn't have afforded two establishments. There hadn't been any women whom he'd really cared for. Oh, he'd had an affair or two, but they hadn't been with the right kind of women. Young girls, too, had seemed frivolous. He hadn't cared about flirting, like most men. Now, of course, this was different—now that he had someone who really understood him—

It could be settled. They loved each other. That was the big thing. Julia must leave Bert. Right away. He couldn't bear to have her stay. She could go to Chicago and get a divorce or Bert could get one. Then they could marry. He'd leave the road. He would make a home for her. It was the only way. He didn't want an ugly love affair. There must be something beautiful, to last forever. He'd be good to her—

Julia, in Allen's arms, was quite satisfied, just the way things were. This was what she wanted, to have Allen's arms around her, his coat against her cheek, the tobacco smell of his clothes. Still—of course—being with him all the time—going away with him—

That night Julia thought of Allen, of his kisses. What was she to do? Leave Bert? Go to Allen? Gracious, but she was having excitement, right here in Morrilton!

As Allen had to leave town the next

day, Julia did not see him alone again, though he telephoned to her. Each day after that she had a letter from him. It seemed wonderful, getting letters, rushing out when the postman came, stuffing the letters unopened into her purse if one of "the girls" happened to be there when the letters arrived. She, Julia Newton, married five years, living in Morrilton, was having a love affair with a handsome drummer who was urging her to elope with him!

There was no doubting Allen's sincerity. His letters, a bit platitudinous, were full of endearments and promises. She must leave right away—he couldn't bear—. The next time he was in Morrilton he would take her away, if not before that. It wasn't right to break up a home, but, after all, love was the great thing—they loved each other, were entitled to their happiness. Julia wrote to Allen, but discreetly, almost stiltedly. She had heard too much about what happens to women who write foolish letters. She was glad Allen wrote the way he did, though she wished he were a trifle less insistent.

The days swung by. Julia hardly noticed material things. She seemed to be breathing a kind of ether. Everything she read, every conversation she heard, seemed related to her own particular case. She had a chance to elope with the man she loved!

Was she going? That was just it. The opportunity was there. That was certain. But, after all. . . .

Here was Morrilton. Here she was—and Bert and her home and her friends. She found she didn't know a single woman who had eloped with anyone nor a woman who had left her husband except after the most cruel treatment. She knew widows, but they were lonely creatures not to be envied. Even the worst scandals she knew about people didn't include a case where a woman had actually eloped with a man. Bert was a good sort. Tiresome, but good. Steady. Not that Allen wasn't steady, too. But a traveling man! And he was willing to take her from her husband! What if she couldn't get

a divorce, couldn't marry Allen, if he left her, deserted her? Eloping was all right in big cities, in books—

Julia remembered the years before she was married and how it seemed not to have a man. If Allen grew tired of her—in Chicago. No. She couldn't do it. Her home and her friends and Morrilton were solid. They were the things that counted. She couldn't go away with Allen.

But she couldn't give him up. She felt that. His arms around her—his mouth pressed against hers—. She must have him. Both Allen and Bert. Allen and Bert and Morrilton. Why not? Love didn't last. She knew that. She had read that often enough. If she were no longer in love with Allen he'd be no more wonderful than Bert. Yet she couldn't give him up, now, while she loved him.

She continued to write discreet letters. He wrote, planning their future. The weeks passed. It was time for him to come to Morrilton again.

She could hardly wait to see him. He telephoned her the moment he reached town. He was at her house at two in the afternoon. What if the neighbors saw him come in? In Morrilton, drummers didn't call on married women. She hoped people wouldn't talk. Still, if she were going away. She knew she wasn't.

When Allen held her in his arms, kissed her, she knew she couldn't give him up altogether.

"Please come with me," he pleaded. "This can't go on. I'm leaving in two days—Friday morning. I must have you. I can't give you up now.

Thursday morning, a couple of hours after he left the house, Bert telephoned her. A new store in a nearby town was starting a grocery department. He had to leave right away. If she'd put a few things into a suit-case for him he'd be right out for it. He'd be back Friday afternoon at the latest. He wanted to catch an afternoon train.

Bert came home and got his bag. Julia looked at him detached, uninterested. She even wondered if perhaps



she'd never see him again. She kissed him good-bye with a simulated warmth. He was all right in his way.

Then the thought came to her. Why not? She wanted Allen. She was in love with Allen. Allen wanted her. Hadn't Allen said that she must decide, that he must have her at once or give her up altogether? She had to make some decision. Why go away with him? Why not keep them both, Bert and Allen? It wasn't right, of course. But it was possible. Quite possible. Other women—. That was the clever thing to do—to have two men. No scandal—no leaving Morrilton nor the certain, pleasant life of nothing to do, her friends, her routine, the little bungalow. Wrong? Other women—. Why not? Allen loved her. If she were careful—. If anything went wrong, if—it was found out—she wouldn't be any worse off than if she went away with Allen, now. If not. . . .

She telephoned Allen, tried to tell him. He didn't seem quite able to understand. But then she didn't dare say much over the phone. Such cats sometimes listened in. She asked him to come out that night after eight. It would be dark then and the neighbors wouldn't see him come in. They did talk so. Discretion—that was it. It would be easy enough to get away with things, even in Morrilton. At eight! Allen—in his arms. Bert. Bert and Allen. Life became wonderful, romantic. Julia spent the whole day thinking of Allen, getting ready for him, dreaming. After all, she wasn't bad looking, was made for something romantic like this to happen to her. Allen—.

## V

BERT returned the next day as he had planned. The new firm had bought quite a bill of goods. If he got a commission—and he ought to make something out of it outside of his salary—there would be a nice bit in it for them. Good pay, that new firm, too. Good

men back of it. He might work up other out-of-town trade like that. Why, one of the men said to him just today—

Julia wondered why she had stayed with Bert. Wondered and yet she knew. This way she had everything, Bert and a home and her friends. No scandal nor gossip. She would be too careful for gossip. Of course, if Bert found out—. He wouldn't find out. Bert—and Allen—.

Allen—. How wonderful he was. Wonderful, and yet different. Different than she had imagined he would be. What difference was there? He had acted as if—almost as if he didn't respect her. Respect her? Hadn't he said, just the day before, that he'd marry her if she left Bert? Hadn't she given him everything? Well, all she could. To keep his love. Of course for that. To prove she hadn't been fooling him—that she really loved him. Oh, Bert was good enough. She had fooled Bert in a way. As long as Bert didn't suspect—. She was as good to Bert as lots of other women were to their husbands. She knew lots of women—

Allen had left town but Julia expected a letter from him the next day. It didn't come. Nor the next. She waited, frightened. Had something happened to him?

She wrote to the town where, knowing his route, she knew a letter would reach him. She waited.

A week passed, feverishly. Why didn't he write? Was he ill? Hadn't he told her he loved her? Was it possible he didn't care, after all she had done for him? She wrote again. Five days later she wrote a third letter. Four letters—and then a letter from Allen.

It was all over. She didn't quite understand his letter. It seemed incoherent, but cruel and heartless. He had misunderstood her, thought her a different kind of woman, he wrote. He had offered her everything, a home, marriage when it was possible. And she had turned out like other women he had known. It was best for them

both if they never saw each other again. No use keeping on with the affair, cheating her husband. He would never see her nor Morrilton again. He was changing his route. It was his fault, of course—weak—foolish. But it had happened. He was sorry. Only, he had believed in her. They could both forget—.

A great wrath arose in Julia. She tore the letter into bits. She cried, lying across her brass bed. She had been deceived—by a traveling man. She, Julia Newton, who had been a good woman, a good, faithful wife, through five years! A drummer had—had deceived her. Wasn't it lucky she hadn't given up everything—gone away with him?

How she hated him! She hated all men. Well, at least no one would ever find out. Wouldn't they? Would Allen tell the Simses or—or maybe a neighbor had seen something? Of course not. People can get away with more than that. That wasn't it at all. What a terrible thing had happened! Yet, too, what an escape! A narrow escape.

She still had her home, her friends, Bert. Bert, of course. How stupid he was. Well, she had cheated Bert and he didn't know it. When he was most stupid she would have that satisfaction.

Morrilton. She'd been wise enough not to give that up. She had felt she

was always too good for Morrilton and her friends. Still, Morrilton was a comfortable place to live in. Things could happen right in Morrilton. At that, other women did things, worse things than she had done, right in Morrilton. It was all just in not being found out. Of course.

Allen. She hated Allen. She had loved him, his kisses, his arms around her. Now—that letter. Well, that was over. If there were only some way she could get even with Allen, spite him. There wasn't. She would never see Allen again. She knew that. Bert. No use getting even with Bert. He hadn't really done anything. And she was even with Bert in a way. She understood men now. She was as good as they were. She'd show them. Next time—next time she'd lead a man on and on—not give anything. Next time? Why not? Other women—

All men weren't like Allen, mean, deceitful. What if they were? Wasn't she a match for any of them? She hated men. Yet, wasn't there a drummer she'd met two days ago at the Harpers?—She'd been too busy thinking about Allen, waiting for a letter, to treat him really pleasantly. Good looking—not like Allen—more like Bert—sandy. Allen—she'd forget Allen in time. What was that fellow's name? Laurence Hill—that was it, Hill—



*WHEN a woman starts listening to a man, a marriage is in prospect. When a man starts listening to a woman, the marriage has been achieved.*



*MEN grapple with finance. Women toy with financiers.*



# The Higher Learning in America

## IV

### Harvard

By Gilbert Seldes

#### I

THE official catalogue is notably silent about the climate, but in a stanza of "Fair Harvard," which is never sung (except possibly on Commencement Day), occur the lines

*Thy shades are more soothing,  
thy sunlight more dear  
Than descend on less privileged  
earth.*

It is not meteorology, but it is magnificent.

The fact is that the weather is rotten. A few bright autumn days and a soft month devoted largely to the torment of examinations set off a brutally capricious and entirely unlovely winter. In November a species of extended duck-board makes its appearance on all the walks of the Yard and the college grounds and these winter garments of repentance lie there until a muddy Spring has passed. It would not surprise me to learn that there was not a single case of trench feet among the Harvard men in the army.

I hope no one imagines that this is trivial. It means that, as far as I know them, Harvard men do not love Harvard. Middlesex Fells or the upper Charles River, or Boston, "capitale infâme," they may love; but not, in my experience, Harvard Yard. The quick unreasonable resentment which comes over me when the Yard is called a campus is exactly the same as the irritation

I feel when a correspondent misspells; but that does not imply any emotional attachment to the hundred hardest words. Little boys in New Jersey villages root for the Detroit American League Baseball Team to win the pennant as wholeheartedly as Harvard men for their football team and with almost as much local pride. The serenity and loveliness which lie over the Harvard scene are not part of the undergraduate life; the place is neither affable nor ecstatic; nothing lush or wanton seduces the soul. Harvard may be the protecting mother of her sons; she is not their mistress.

I have cast a disparaging eye upon the Yale and Princeton grounds and have looked with curiosity upon other seats of learning without discovering why men are so ready to die for their colleges. Life there must be incredibly lovely to inspire what used to be called without humor the supreme sacrifice. I know that Englishmen of forty and fifty speak lovingly and longingly of the moist "relaxing" atmosphere of Oxford. The sense of place which flourishes in the heart of every Englishman and which I have not met in America except in certain counties of Kansas, simply does not exist at Harvard.

When I say that Harvard men do not love Harvard I have no intention of indulging in the undergraduate trick of riding one's own college. There are other reasons why Harvard is ignorant of "college spirit" and there are other

things which give Harvard its special character. But this lack of physical attraction, I seriously believe, forms the character of Harvard men and creates their attitude toward the college. They live there four supposedly receptive years, in a freedom and felicity greater than they are likely to find anywhere afterward; but the place forbids sentimentality, and the emotion it evokes is not passionate. Privately we think ourselves civilized.

I do not know whether the platitudes of collegiate life (which is not the same thing as "college life") are the same everywhere. For the sake of economy I should like to say that there are at Harvard a certain number of men who have come for reasons not even remotely connected with education. The supposition that a college education makes a man a gentleman is rapidly giving way to the equally gross idea that going to college gives a man a superior start in life—superior in the sense of his making money faster after he starts. I do not say that the second of these is not true; only that it is as gross as the former. Merely being at Harvard or any other college may make a man a fool and a snob if nature so intended him. The only important thing to me about Harvard is that it actually encourages an interest in the activities of civilized human beings.

The faculty of arts and sciences really has something to do with this; far more the social scene promotes culture because, unlike most American settings, it does not deride and forbid it.

Within the last few college generations Harvard has changed much. Freshmen nowadays go to the Freshmen dormitories, there to form those lasting friendships which are supposed to be one of the great advantages of a college education. Seniors, in the interests of democracy, live in the Senior dormitories in the Yard. There is, apparently, a slight tendency toward regimentation which the war has probably done nothing to check—but it is too soon to know. The Harvard of day before yesterday was a college for the independent man;

and that tradition lasted well into my own time. I do not believe that a few years and a few institutions can change it completely. Only the other day I saw an editorial in the *Lampoon*, a merciless rejoinder to an appeal to Harvard men to do their duty by one of their teams, to come out and cheer as a matter of loyalty to Harvard. The presumption remains at Harvard that a man ought to cheer his team if he wants to cheer his team; and that if he wants to read for honors in mathematics while the Yale game is going on he is no less a Harvard man, although he may not be having quite so good a time. There is a tradition which keeps all good Harvard men together: it is the tradition that they must be let alone.

"Our undisciplinables are our proudest product!" wrote William James, himself the most gregarious of men according to those who studied with him. So there must always have been a discipline. The college with its requirements in scholarship (they have been progressively stiffened but they are by no means overwhelming even now) and its minimum requirements of decency in regard to wine, women, and music after ten at night, provided a framework, within which nearly everybody did what they pleased. Including thinking.

There were some who would not be disciplined to the New England atmosphere and drank every wine but the wine of the Puritans. Some of them did it vulgarly and some had good manners and some were rebels and talked about Dionysos. There was, in fact, a Dowson Club formed one year; the shingle, which is Harvard for certificate of membership, ran something like this: "A—B—, having sung the song of Cynara and called for redder roses and more wine is duly elected a member of The Dowson Club." It had three members and I witnessed the incineration of no less than four shingles sent to putative aesthetes who held to the Harvard tradition of solitary faith. When Oscar Wilde lectured in Boston a number of undergraduates marched into the hall arrayed in a burlesque of his costume,

flower and all, imitating his odd gait. From contemporary accounts it must have been rather ill-mannered; but it was spontaneous and Wilde made the retort courteous by giving (or at least offering) a copy of "The Wrestlers" to the College.

But so far as anyone knows there never was an anti-aesthetic movement at Harvard and certainly in recent years there have been no "movements" of any sort. There was a Socialist Club and there were men who helped break strikes and from press reports there seems to be an exceptionally able lot of anti-militarists there now. Five men or five hundred men are always getting together and doing what they like; and no one feels that everybody else ought to do the same thing.

This applies even to classes. Since the Seniors and the Freshmen have taken to flocking by themselves there has been a small renaissance of class spirit. The college authorities may think it a good thing for a man to know as many of his fellows as well as he can, and President Lowell, in one of his annual reports, implies that this can be done best if the man is thrown into contact with his classmates.

My own experience and that of most of my friends has been different; our widest and deepest friendships were with upper classmen and all of us feel that we profited mightily by knowing all the best men in a cycle of college years instead of in our own year alone. A Yale man—a slightly apocryphal one—has boasted of knowing all his classmates but one by their first names. Of the 609 men in my class I know a dozen by their first names, four of whom I knew before entering college; I know about five times that number of men who were in college in my time far better than I do even that dozen.

Class-consciousness did not exist a few years ago; it was as obsolete as hazing. Looking back at the men I knew best while there, I cannot convince myself of exclusiveness. Like everyone else there I knew chiefly those who attracted and interested me; to wit,

in part: two poets, one millionaire man about town, one dilettante, one aesthete, the members of the dramatic club, the successive staffs of one college periodical, three Phi Beta Kappa men, two H men, the members of the Socialist Club and their chief enemies, two law students, several editors of the *Lampoon*, three uplifters, a debater, a debauché, a dramatist. No one ever told me that I was being disloyal because I did not find equally attractive men in my own class.

## II

WITHOUT a violent college spirit and with no class feeling, to what are Harvard undergraduates loyal? Chiefly to the men they associate with and to the things they are doing. Few are loyal to their tablemates at Memorial Hall into which they dash at a quarter of nine and out of which at five minutes after. They spend fine afternoons making drawings for the *Lampoon* and cut hours at the risk of being interviewed by a dean in order to get ads for the Dramatic Club program or kill themselves with tutors in order to remain eligible for the football team. Or they study or they loaf around Boston or they see life.

Before Prohibition the college did not forbid beer in the dormitories and beer nights took the place of smokers; not many men had wine regularly in their rooms. Drinking never was a recognized college activity. Quite a number of men seriously wanted to be admitted into the best of the fraternities. They still do and it is held an honor to be chosen among the first group for the Institute or for its inner circle. But the clubs remain purely social and it does not stigmatize a man as a failure if he has made none of them. The initiation stunts when men "run for the Dickey" are quite amusing.

If you are not a club man your life is a little different, but not much. You loaf where you can. It used to be considered funny but not offensive to have tea at the Harvard Union—the one big club to which everybody belongs and to



which, a few years ago, no one went if he had any more agreeable place to go. It was seriously put forth as a means toward greater democracy, this great club from which no one was excluded. The illusion of democracy dies hard there. In effect, the Union's excellent library occasionally brought together two men with the same taste in books. And, I suppose, the pool tables downstairs also did their bit for the world-cause. (The library committee, by the way, refused for one solid year to buy a copy of "The Lake," by George Moore, although about ten men signed a request for it.) The Union also went in for moving pictures at one time and democracy rose nearly to par; hundreds of students came and laughed at the same thing. Also, on the top floor, were the offices of the *Harvard Monthly* and the *Harvard Advocate*.

It is a very special case, but the *Monthly* will give some indication of what Harvard men care about and how they care. Put in its place the football team or Phillips Brooks House (the religious center of the college) or any other activity—because the significance of the *Monthly* does not lie in its connection with letters but in its relation to the college. It was founded in 1885 and until 1917, when it suspended, it had on its editorial boards the most talented writing men in the college. They ranged from George Santayana to Norman Hapgood and from Robert Herrick to John Reed. There never was the slightest social distinction in being one of its editors; it had a few beer nights a year and its editors struggled with the make-up and with the deficit.

Five or six men, usually from the three upper classes, made up the editorial board and two or three men did the business end. It was always a bit too highbrow to be successful among the students; once in a while it published a poem which was a college joke; one year it turned radical. But the men who worked on it had for it a devotion which is unparalleled in my experience. The rumor of its dissolution, shortly before its end, brought an endless stream

of letters from graduate editors with everything from moral advice to offers of an endowment fund. Nearly every one of these letters, including those from the business department men, said the same thing, that being on the *Monthly* was the greatest thing in the whole four years of college. It took an intensely private effort to meet the requirements for election and except in one case no man ever had the requisite number of things published and failed to be elected. The college was totally indifferent to its existence; it was remote from the undergraduate life and discussed few questions of the collegiate day. But it managed to exist and to be the one thing to which the minds of its makers turned as the center of their undergraduate lives.

The thing can be said in a hundred different ways but it had best be said in one. The habit of mind which Harvard allows to exist is that of independence. It is as difficult there as elsewhere to resist the temptation to live in a crowd; but there is no compulsion. The Harvard which I knew was not democratic, except in one sense; that it preferred to dispose men according to their deserts and, as Hamlet advised, according to its own nobility.

Of the 2500 men in the college proper at one time, 2000 surely are destined to be the backbone of the nation, and 250 to get lost, and a small fragment of the rest will remain individuals. A college course can help that small fragment to touch the comparatively small number of fine things which the mind of man has created; and, more important, it can be encouraged in its independence. For the 2000 the best that the college can do is to suggest that there are five or ten interesting things in the world apart from the particular thing which is being used to bring in dollars.

Harvard does this now by requiring each student to take at least one course in each of the four chief divisions of the curriculum, so that the man who concentrates in economics will have had a glimpse into letters and philosophy and science. Six of the seventeen courses

required for a degree must be in one field of study; the college believes that it is good for a man to know a great deal about at least one subject before he leaves. The scope for dilettantism is therefore limited. The fact that before a man comes to Harvard he hasn't had the intelligence to satisfy his curiosity and that after he leaves he usually goes into a professional school or into business and smatters no longer has evidently been forgotten.

Smattering is frowned upon. I know one earnest young student who was eligible for Phi Beta Kappa on his scholarship record but was not elected; among his disqualifications was the single word "dilettante." (He was admitted later and has become quite a practical business man but he is still an incorrigible smatterer; I saw him at a concert one afternoon recently when he should have been at his office.) The democratic influence is trying to make Harvard practical; from an article written by one of its professors I gather that Harvard's greatest failure is its lack of a college of scientific agriculture.

In 1636 a group of serious citizens, fearing lest with the death of their contemporaries Massachusetts would be left in the hands of an uninstructed ministry, founded the college which a moderate bequest afterward caused to be called Harvard. That was a practical purpose, to be sure, and it is interesting to notice that the founders, laying a not inconsiderable wager with time, won out. The founders desired to supply the needs of their immediate time and place.

It seems to us with our lengthy perspective that they had a fairly lofty idea of the requirements. An enlightened peasantry or an enlightened bar or an enlightened manufacturing class would be a considerable novelty nowadays. I do not know of any college which is trying to provide it. I only know that the spirit by nature destined to the manufacture of boots can get enlightenment at Harvard without pain.

And that, I suppose, is what makes the Harvard man so insupportable to others. For four years he has escaped the dragooning of modern civilization and to a large extent the idiocy of professional democracy. If he has swaddled himself in a large fur coat and lived like a mental backwoodsman, he has done even that on the motion of his own spirit. He hasn't been compelled to be friendly with a world alien to his experience and hostile to his feelings; he has been allowed to choose, to exercise his discrimination, to distinguish between what is sound and what is false by his own standards. He is frequently ignorant of literature and music and philosophy and the fine arts; but he has one of the fundamentals of culture which is independent exercise of the power of judgment. Observing my elders after college I should say that the habit of discrimination wears off quickly. Those who hold fast to the tradition, whom James called "the truth-seeking and independent and often very solitary sons," are the ones who are usually pointed out as typical Harvard men. It is a grateful libel.

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*(The next article in this series will be "The University of Michigan,"  
by G. D. Eaton.)*



## Interlude Orientale

*By Carlyn Gichner*

EACH morning I had watched her being borne toward the seraglio of the Sultan, and each evening borne from it. I had often wondered about her mission there. She was, I knew, not beautiful enough to please even an Oriental, for one windy day, when a chance breeze lifted her veil, I saw the conglomeration of features that served as her face. She was certainly not a trained musician, for her raucous voice and pudgy fingers forbade her either playing or singing. And as for that mass of fat dancing even the stomach dance—my artistic soul shuddered at the thought.

I suspected that she was a person of importance, for all who passed her greeted her with low salaams. At last I decided to accost her, to learn the mysterious mission with which she was entrusted, her connection with him who was undisputed Lord of the Land. Therefore one day I inquired in faultless Zaza,

"Will the Eye of Beauty deign to answer even the least of her slaves? What, I pray thee answer, art thou to the Sultan?"

"I," she returned, "am his cushion."



## You Took My Dreams

*By Leslie Nelson Jennings*

YOU took my dreams and broke them,  
Each foolish, fragile one—  
Came in the dawn and woke them,  
And laughed there in the sun!

Hands that were wise and tender,  
Hands that were kind so long,  
Is there indeed no mender  
Of dreams to right such wrong?

You took my dreams . . . And after  
All bitter words were said,  
You killed them with your laughter—  
And it was Love lay dead!



# The Confessions of a Misogynist

By *Lawrence Vail*

I

A FEW days ago, about the hour of sunset, I was walking through Central Park. Somewhat nauseated by the spectacle of lovers strewn over the benches and grass, I hurriedly made my way to the more unfrequented parts of the parks. Suddenly, as I mounted a miniature hill, my attention was held by an appealing cry which seemed to proceed from a grove of trees on my left. A certain phrase, twice repeated, the second time more weakly, excited my curiosity:

"Madam, at my age, I beg of you. . . ."

It is my belief that for a man of my station I am not easily shocked, still I could not help being distressingly affected by the exhibition afforded me. Lying on the grass, both her arms wound around the knees of an old gentleman vainly attempting to free himself, I saw no other person than Mrs. Selwyn Thomas, one of our most distinguished young matrons. My horror was all the more intense as it was to the care of this supposedly reputable chaperon that I had entrusted the care of my daughter Emily on more than one week-end party.

I like to think, in slight extenuation of her behaviour, that it was my unexpected appearance and not the last scarlet rays of the sun that was responsible for a rush of colour over Mrs. Thomas' face. Slowly, reluctantly, I thought, she released the old man, who, wearied by the unequal struggle, sank on the grass and proceeded to dry his forehead.

I was about to give Mrs. Thomas a piece of my mind when she suddenly broke into tears. There is something

about a weeping woman that disarms me in spite of my fifty years.

"What," she cried, "has he got against me?"

And, as I looked at her in wonderment: "It's all wrong," she wailed, wringing her hands. "I never thought that he, the irresistible, could be able to resist me. Surely it is not his rôle."

I glanced over at the old man. For one termed irresistible, he bore a most ludicrous and shabby appearance. Over a soft white shirt with old-fashioned jabots he wore a tight-fitting, tattered tail coat. Two whiskers, one of which was ruffled from the fray, hung from his hollow cheeks. His eyes, dark, large and deep-sunken, were the most dismal I had ever seen.

"No woman," cried Mrs. Thomas, "has ever suffered such humiliation." Then, addressing herself directly to me: "Have you ever heard of Don Juan disdaining a lady at the first interview?"

"Don Juan!" I exclaimed. "What are you talking about? The old ruffian died several centuries ago."

She turned on me indignantly: "Do you think that you would have found a woman like me begging for the love of any other man?"

Though her words had the fire of conviction, I still remained incredulous. I questioned the old man.

He bowed his head meekly.

"Yes," he answered, "I am that unfortunate gentleman."

The anger that possessed me when I became convinced of the old man's identity will be certainly appreciated by every clean-minded, wholesome, normal American.

"Gentleman!" I shouted. "You dare

call yourself a gentleman! You who have corrupted innocent virgins, stolen women's affections from their lawful husbands. You and your kind are the greatest curse of humanity. No fate, no punishment is too severe for you."

And, so intense was my indignation that despite Mrs. Thomas' presence I spat on the ground.

"It's no use," said Mrs. Thomas. "The Señor, I think, is immortal."

I moved threateningly toward the Don, who, I must confess, showed no symptoms of fear.

"Don't hurt him," cried Mrs. Thomas. "These dangerous gentlemen are so rare over here."

I turned toward Mrs. Thomas.

"This is an affair," I said sternly "to be settled between men."

I think she was impressed by my tone. She rose to her feet, and, sniveling a little, stretched her hand toward Don Juan.

"None of that!" I cried. "Go!"

She had a short moment of rebellion.

"Why so cross?" she said to me. Then to the Don:

"Call me up when you're through with him. Lenox 70176."

## II

"AND now," I said to Don Juan, "I am going to give you the worst thrashing you ever had in your life."

The rapidly diminishing light prevented me from seeing the full effect of my words. I think, however, I saw the old man make a futile gesture of appeal with his frail hands.

"Though it goes against my nature," I said, "to lay hands on a man old enough to be my father. . . ."

"Not your father," broke in Don Juan, "your ancestor."

"Ancestors be damned!" I cried with a fine display of those democratic principles I have never genuinely believed in. "All I know is that when I have done with you, you will be in no humour for philandering."

"I wish you would tell me," said the

old man with a smoothness that only served to aggravate my temper, "in what way I have offended you."

"As a father," I cried, "I consider it my duty to avenge the innocent daughters deceived by your false promises. As a husband, the wives you have beguiled from their husbands. Have you anything to say for yourself? I give you five minutes."

"Why should anyone," said Don Juan, wearily, "be put to the task of defending himself? I am as I am, you are as you are, people are as they are, the world is as it is, things are as they are. No doubt there is room for improvement, but since we are helpless before destiny. . . ."

"If you think," I broke in, "that you can put me off by your twaddle, you're mistaken. I'm not a foreigner, I'm not a woman, I'm an American who knows his own mind. Things shall be as I choose to make them."

"I only wished," returned the old decrepit nobleman, "to spare you unnecessary exertion. The high-strung lady who has recently left us was right when she voiced the melancholy fact that I was immortal. I might go even further and say I was invulnerable. To be sure, I've been scratched and bruised now and then. I've felt between each of my ribs the touch of cold steel, I've had poison in my soup, ropes round my neck. But these little things, which would prove fatal to the majority of men, have not been detrimental to my good health."

"Wait till I've done with you," I exclaimed. "Then you can tell me whether or not you're invulnerable."

Don Juan sighed.

"How many times, alas, have I heard these very words! Irate fathers, jealous husbands, frantic lovers, incensed brothers—all promising to break every bone in my body, rid the world, as they put it, of the scum of me. There was Don Ramiro de Cordoba, as fine and haughty a gentleman as you could find south of the Pyrenees. I remember a summer afternoon when he swore to dispatch me to the next world



because he had found his daughter Dolores lying in my arms—a position she had assumed without any encouragement on my part, the day being unusually hot. She was upbraiding me, when her father appeared, for the coldness of my caresses. That my caresses were indifferent, therefore likely to be chaste, should have assured Don Ramiro of the innocuousness of my attentions. You would have thought he would have sent his daughter to bed—she was only fifteen—and paused to argue the matter. Not a bit of it, sir. He proceeded without any preamble to deal me such a blow on the head with the back of his sword that I, though never an optimist, thought I had seen the last of this tantalizing world.

"You can imagine my surprise when I awoke a few hours later to gaze into the benevolent eyes of a certain Dona Bianca, a lady renowned over all Andalusia for her beauty and philanthropy. I was to lie quiet, she whispered, and proceeded to bathe my forehead with some evil smelling ointment. I am not the man to gainsay a lady, therefore, though I had never felt more alert in my life, I lay quiet. The poor girl thinks, I said to myself, that she is performing a labour of charity; it would be cruel to disillusion her. I am convinced now that it is to this humoring of the foibles and hobbies of humanity that I owe my unenviable reputation. In short, I permitted myself to be carried in a litter to Dona Bianca's residence where she, to employ her rather hackneyed figure of speech, rescued me from the jaws of death.

"After a couple of weeks—a man is a man—I grew weary of lying in bed. My régime, which consisted of water and milk, began to pall upon me. I got up, dressed, went downstairs. I had hardly started to take leave of Dona Bianca when the good lady broke into tears. I did what was expected of me: dried her eyes, sought to calm her by the customary caresses. By the end of a week I thought to have brought her to a tractable frame of mind. Again I made a tentative move of de-

parture. She bade me good-bye with an equanimity which should have made me suspicious. Just as I was about to leave her, however, her brother, Don Pedro, appeared on the scene. He told me that I had compromised his sister and must pay the penalty. Whereupon he bound me to a tree and proceeded to horse-whip me till he dropped on the ground from exhaustion.

"That night I was rescued from a somewhat cramped position by Pequita, Dona Bianca's soubrette. She hid me in her room and set about nursing me back to life. From a little ditty which she sang in a shrill, rather unpleasant voice, I learned that she had loved me long and hopelessly. I was soon to discover from her gestures that she had suddenly become hopeful. I was growing resigned to my rôle as perpetual invalid, when we were interrupted by José, stable boy, Pequita's betrothed. I have to thank that young man for my escape from an embroglio that threatened to lack variety. He threw me out of the window, and I fell, a little out of breath, in the centre of a plot of cabbages. I was successful in making my escape from Cordoba before any further attempts were made to rescue me."

It must have been the intensity of my horror which paralyzed my limbs, that prevented me from strangling Don Juan in the middle of his story.

"Your infamy," I cried, "is more horrible than I ever imagined. I have never conceived of anything more revolting than your attitude toward women. I never expected you, of course, to have that sentiment of reverence which every true American has for the frailer sex. Still you might have a word of pity and kindness for those poor deluded creatures who sacrificed their peace and happiness for your sake. But what is the use of reasoning with you? You probably take glory in your scandalous adventures."

"You are mistaken," said the Don sadly, "if you think that I take any sort of pride in my misfortunes. Merely to do you a service did I sketch one

of the minor episodes of my life. I wished to spare you the trouble and exertion of seeking to destroy me. Had I been mortal, I should surely have found my fate at the hands of Gonzales, High Inquisitor of Seville, whose mistress, La Consuelito, a dancer of no mean accomplishments, happened to take a fancy to the color of my eyes. As I made no answer to her advances, conducted in the most conventional manner through a duenna, she contrived to have me waylaid one night in July, when after a suffocating day I was seeking a breath of fresh air on the banks of the Guadalquivir.

"Though I protested that I was a quiet respectable bourgeois, unschooled in erotic practices, this wilful lady must fret me till I made love to her. Like most men who value their time, I prefer to kiss a woman than argue with her; therefore I did her bidding, taking measures, however, that news of these proceedings should reach the ears of the High Inquisitor. Much as I loathe a scandal, I have seldom found another way out of my entanglements. Sometimes a lover is killed, a husband breaks a blood vessel, a lady is sent to a convent, which creates a certain drop in the tension.

"I also on this occasion let it be known that I held unorthodox views concerning the trinity. This gave Gonzales the pretext he wanted. I was tried, found guilty, condemned to the wheel. At last, I said to myself, my tribulations are over; tomorrow, next week at the latest, I shall find a peaceful resting place underground. Not only, however, did the wheel fail to destroy me, but I destroyed the wheel. I assure you that this was accomplished without my volition: the toughness of my skin, the elasticity of my bones and articulations, a certain perverse attachment of my soul for my body, are probably to blame for this lamentable business.

I likewise caused damage to the rack, the spiked doors, and the flaying mill. The Inquisition was in an uproar. In another week I would have injured

the entire inquisitorial paraphernalia. I was exiled from Spain."

"Bah!" I said contemptuously. "I have always had my own opinions regarding the efficacy of these foreign corrective contrivances. We, over here, have a better way of settling disputes. For what, do you think, have we been given our fists?"

"Perhaps you do not know," said Don Juan, "that I have spent a number of years in England. I was always being thrown among those honest but somewhat unimaginative gentlemen who sought to punish what they called my infamy by the most approved though somewhat primitive man to man methods. Alas, with all their strenuous punching these conscientious gentlemen could do nothing but slightly damage my nose. I find myself to my regret unable to thank them for this operation. In truth, after each encounter, the subtly altered shape of my central feature seemed to render me more attractive to the ladies of the land."

It was at this juncture in Don Juan's narrative that my patience suddenly forsook me. Without any further discussion I crashed my fist into that part of the old man's anatomy which he had described as perilous to the honour of the ladies of Albion.

My attempts at punishment, however, did not have the result I expected. I had the uncanny illusion that my fists were sinking into a vague pulpy substance which resented my onslaught no more than a cushion.

Undaunted, however, by the Don's total lack of resistance, I continued my efforts. When my arms grew limp, I had resort to my feet—an unsportsmanlike procedure, I confess, but justifiable in the present instance. I am not a young man and after half an hour of exercise I became conscious of a certain faintness and lassitude. I do not easily accept defeat, so I compelled myself to attack the old man with more vigor. Suddenly I acted in a manner the memory of which always fills me with humiliation.

Like a woman, like a debile, hysteri-

cal foreigner—I suddenly lost complete consciousness.

## III

WHEN I came to myself a few hours later, I was lying in bed in my apartment on 86th street. By my bedside, regarding me with a solicitous smile, was Don Juan.

"I took the liberty," he said to me, "of searching into your pocketbook for your address."

Finding it insufferable to be in debt to one I was unable to respect, I turned my back on the old gentleman. I sank into a fitful sleep from which I was awakened by some piercing feminine shrieks.

I sat up straight in bed.

"What are you doing?" I cried. "Up to your old tricks again?"

"It's the young lady—your daughter," Don Juan replied. "She thought I was tired and asked me to lie down. I locked her up in the pantry. Shall I let her out?"

"Leave her where she is," I said quickly.

With the assistance of the Spaniard I got out of bed and settled myself in an armchair.

"If you will be so kind," I said to him, "to go into the dining-room, you will find a bottle of sarsaparilla on the sideboard."

He remarked my wry face as I drank what I consider on most occasions a delightful and refreshing beverage. Though an abstemious man, I admit that I felt in need of something more stimulating.

"A fine pass we have come to," said the Don, "when we have to ruin our tempers and stomachs by pink water and bubbles."

His remark recalled my latent antagonism.

"I am proud to say," I cried, "that I belong to a country that has declared war on the filthy habit of liquor."

"There was a time," said Don Juan wistfully, "when men used to gather in the tavern after dinner and pass a few

words in good comradeship over a bottle of wine or a tankard of ale. To me these hours were the most precious of a much harried life. A warmth seemed to radiate from us. We, who had vied with each other pitilessly in the stress of the day, seemed to be drawn together by some magic bond. If not better men—for virtue is capable of many often conflicting interpretations—I am sure we were more tolerant. Only then was I able to forget that there were women in the world."

"And yet," I challenged, "of what did you talk in these orgies? Sometimes about the crops and the weather, sometimes about politics, but principally about women."

"Is it not less irritating," asked the Don, "to listen to men talking about women than to listen to women talking about men? Or talking about anything else for that matter?"

"I wish," I said curtly, "that you would not voice your opinions in my house."

"Did it never occur to you," continued Don Juan, "that these women for whom you hold so eccentric a reverence were in a measure protected by the pleasure men find in wine? Young men"—and the old gentleman shrugged—"will always be out for excitement. Keep them from the tavern, they'll be after the petticoat. I am sure Aphrodite never had so many votaries since the temple of Dionysius has been closed."

"There's something about you," I said, regarding the old man with a certain curiosity, "which tempts me to believe that you are not entirely beyond redemption. The way you brought me home after I had done my best to beat you to death was certainly the act of a Christian. Your behaviour toward my daughter is also in your favour. She is, I grieve to admit, a provocative young hussy; what we call a flirt." I paused a moment, then with an appeal to the man's better nature: "If you would only promise to reform!"

Again Don Juan sighed. "If the

women would help me! If they would do their bit!"

"Come now," I said banteringly. "That they're not all saints, I'll admit. Still, don't you think it rather unfair to blame them for everything?"

"I wonder," said Don Juan reflectively, "if I shall ever escape from the web of misconceptions and lies legend has woven around me. I know that you won't believe me when I tell you that though I've had more to do with women than most men, at the same time I was never attracted by any one of them. I always was what they call a misogynist."

"What!" I cried incredulously.

"Yes, a misogynist. Not only do women afford me no pleasure, but they seem to me absurd. Indeed, what more ridiculous spectacles than one of these flabby creatures going about her business—which usually means the business of others—waddling in her skirts? And their grimaces and gestures which they consider so fetching—the g i g g l i n g, pouting and tittering; the glad eyes and sad eyes, the sly winks and supposedly impish smiles. Was anything more self-conscious, I ask you, ever created? To think that these tricks and devices are made to allure us! What an insult to our sex. And yet, I sorrowfully admit, how many of us swallow the bait!"

"You do the sex an injury," I said to Don Juan, "by your generalizations. Many, unfortunately, are as you show them—frivolous, fawning, affected. But what about those who have no desire to cater to the deplorable weakness of man? I mean our lady politicians, our social workers, all those who have an ideal and a higher purpose in life."

"You refer, I gather, to the cohorts of the disappointed. Alas, from them, too, have I suffered! By pretending to appeal to your better nature, fortifying themselves behind their bad looks and pedantry, they seek to gain possession of your mind and soul. If it comes to a matter of choice, I prefer the old-fashioned flirts and coquettes, the ingénues, the vampires. At my time of life, you see, a man is inclined to be

conservative: he is wary of exchanging old evils for new. Perhaps, also, I have during my melancholy career acquired a certain technique of protection—without doubt inadequate—but often of considerable assistance against the classic feminine wiles. I know of a few subterfuges and compromises which render the enforced companionship of these women tolerable if not pleasurable. Dealing with the modern woman, however, I find myself completely at a loss. Her prolific and rather wearisome arguments about sex equality, feminism, the rights of the superwoman, rob me of all my vitality. When she finally attacks me directly, as she inevitably does, I have no strength left in me to resist."

"If these are your sincere opinions," I said, "why did you not leave women alone? Why this constant pursuit of the feminine, this wholesale seduction of virgins, this leading astray of reputable wives from the ways of their duty?"

"During my adolescence," returned the Don, "when I was bold, young and strong, I shunned women completely. Perhaps it was my marked avoidance of their society which piqued these ladies, drew them to me. What else in me could have attracted them, I am unable to tell. Perhaps some irregularity in my features, some unconscious mannerism or peculiarity of speech which made an appeal to their innate perversity."

"Then you did not," I said, "continue to shun them?"

"In an hour of despair," quoth Don Juan, "I determined to change my tactics. 'If women pursue me because I avoid them,' I reasoned, 'perhaps they will avoid me if I pursue them. Should one woman rebuff me, others may follow suit.' It is experimenting with this theory that I acquired my nefarious reputation."

"Do you mean," I cried incredulously, "that no woman has ever resisted you?"

The old gentleman shook his head.

"They yielded, all of them yielded,

they still continue to yield. I have done all in my power to shock, pain, bore, distress and offend them—all to no satisfactory effect. My hopes ran high when I came to America. I had been told that the young women were haughty and spirited, some of them given to quaint fits of prudery. Even here I have been disappointed."

"And now," I inquired, "do you pursue or shun women?"

"Sometimes one, sometimes the other. It depends on the season, on whether or not I am tired. In my more vigorous hours, I act as I did with your daughter. When it's very warm, or if I'm exhausted, I usually give in."

I was debating what manner of ad-

vice to give the old man when the telephone bell started to ring.

"It's Mrs. Thomas," I said; "she wants to see you immediately."

Don Juan rose slowly from his chair and, sighing deeply, put on his hat.

"You are not going to her!" I cried.

"What can I do?" said Don Juan shrugging his frail, bent shoulders. "If I refuse, she'll be here in an hour. I don't want to cause you any inconvenience."

"Stay here as my guest. I'll hide you. I'll tell her you've left New York."

"You can't keep your daughter locked up in the pantry," said the Don. "It isn't sanitary."



## Standards

*By John Torcross*

HE liked Les Chansons de Bilitis, Venetian glass, Degas' ballet girls, Grand Marnier, Aubrey Beardsley's early work, Sevres china, lapis lazuli. . . . They said he was a queer one.

He liked professional baseball, near-beer, poker, "comic" moving pictures, stock-tickers, chewing gum, burlesque shows, hotel lobbies, manicure girls. . . .

They said he was the Real Thing.



A WOMAN'S heart is always beating time to some man's disillusioned love affair.





# The Death of Bacchus

*By Charles G. Shaw*

BACCHUS had been tried and convicted of no end of indescribable atrocities. There obviously could be no doubt as to his guilt, for the jury represented twelve of the greatest reformers in the country and the judge and prosecuting attorney were the world's most efficient uplifters. Death was the penalty.

The unfortunate fellow was accordingly marched off to the room of execu-

tion, forthwith electrocuted and his body placed upon a bier where all might see.

It should be a symbol, they said, representing the triumph of Right over Wrong.

As the last of his destroyers departed, there was a movement of the corpse. Then he rose from the couch of death and waddled off, grinning from ear to ear.



## Voices of Silence

*By Abigail W. Cresson*

*STILL roads I follow,  
Hill road and hollow,  
Where silence leans  
With the sky in her hands;  
Bird calls, wood calls,  
Wild rush of waterfalls—  
Sounds that the heart knows  
And understands.*

*I hear, not hearing . . .  
Down through the clearing,  
The low road, the high road,  
Road up the hill,  
Leaf sound, wind sound,  
Twig snapping on the ground—  
These go with me,  
Yet my way is still.*

# Dinner

[A Play in One Act]

By Franz Molnar

[Author of "Liliom," "The Devil," "The Phantom Rival," etc.]

## THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAY:

THE HOST  
THE HOSTESS  
THE DOCTOR  
THE DOCTOR'S WIFE  
THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR  
THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR'S WIFE  
THE YOUNG MAN  
THE POLICE AGENT  
A LADY  
TWO LACKEYS  
FOUR GYPSIES (*Musicians*)

SCENE: *An estate in Hungary, near Budapest.*

TIME: *The Present.*

*The dining-room in the country house of a very rich man. As the curtain rises seventeen persons are seated about the long table in the middle of the room. Dinner is just over. In the rear there is a large door leading into an elegant suite of rooms. The nearest one is the music room, and the keyboard of a grand piano is visible just inside the door. On the rear wall of the farthest salon is a magnificent mirror. All of the rooms are lighted by electroliers hung with cut-glass pendants. An air of excessive and somewhat garish wealth.*

*To the right, in the dining-room, there is a door protected by a fine Japanese screen. The four Gypsy Musicians sit in front of it.*

*As the curtain rises The Young Man gets to his legs and launches, in the Hungarian manner, into a florid toast to The Host. At first there is so much conversation that his words are not heard, but in a moment or two he becomes audible.*

## THE YOUNG MAN

. . . This rotten and degenerate age, with corruption almost universal, and everything succumbing to secret and sinister influences. All the more honor, then, to a man who rises by his

own strength, with no help save honesty and courage. To such a man, I say, the laurel rightly belongs. He deserves, in fact, a whole forest of laurels. Such a man is our host. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you his health! May he live long, honored and happy! *Hoch!*

*(A buzz of approval, with loud Hochs and much clinking of glasses. The Gypsies play a flourish.)*

THE HOST

*(Rising and bowing.)* Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.

*(More Hochs and clinking of glasses.)*

THE DOCTOR'S WIFE

What a lovely idea? A whole forest of laurel!

THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

*Hoch! Hoch!* Now we must hear from the doctor.

THE DOCTOR'S WIFE

I think it's a positively beautiful thought. A whole forest of laurel!

*(She clinks glasses with The Privy Councillor.)*

VARIOUS GUESTS

*Hoch! Hoch! Speech! Speech!*

A GUEST

The doctor next!

*(A renewed rattling of glasses and volleying of Hochs. The Gypsies saw away at their fiddles. The Lackeys circle the table with champagne.)*

THE DOCTOR

*(Trying to appear reluctant.)* I'd be delighted, but— Really, I—

THE HOST

Well, then, my dear doctor, give us something humorous. Something like your speech at the students' corps banquet. Ye gods, what magnificent puns! *(To the assemblage.)* Now he's going to double us up. *(To The Doctor.)* Come on! Up, old fellow! And don't hesitate to lay it on!

THE DOCTOR

*(Struggling to his feet, his glass in hand.)* Now you scare me. I can't think of a thing to say. I—

THE HOST

*(Boosily.)* Well, then, what's the matter with the toast you offered at

the students' banquet? Let's have it again. Out with it!

*(He begins to roar with anticipatory joy.)*

A LADY

Come, doctor, what was it?

THE DOCTOR

*(Evidently somewhat cloudy.)* The fact is, I—

THE HOSTESS

That's always the way. You keep your best jokes for the men. Why can't we women hear them? Try us once!

THE DOCTOR

*(With an elaborate bow.)* Coming from such charming lips, the slightest wish is a command.

ALL

*Bravo! Hoch! Hoch!*

*(More clinking of glasses.)*

THE HOST

Don't mind me, Doctor. Go as far as you like.

THE DOCTOR

*(Putting on his best banquet manner.)* Ladies and gentlemen—dear friends, both male and female—esteemed companions, both past and present—

THE YOUNG MAN

Superb!

THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

How true!

THE DOCTOR

Most beautiful ladies,—

THE HOST

*Hoch! Hoch!*

THE HOSTESS

Be quiet! Let us hear the doctor.

THE DOCTOR

It has been well said by one of the ancient poets—was it Goethe, or Aris-

tophanes, or Dante? I forget. But the saying I remember well. What was it? Ah, I have it! Nothing ventured, nothing gained. So far, so good. You who are familiar with the great classics know it—in fact, you know it quite as well as I do. Well, I stand that saying on its head. It becomes, He who ventures, gains. I go further. I stand it on its head again. I make it: He who gains, ventures.

*(Great applauses. More champagne goes down.)*

THE YOUNG MAN

*Kolossal!*

THE DOCTOR

As I was saying, he who gains, ventures. That is, he who gains wealth and renown by his own native genius and unremitting diligence, he who rises in the world until not even dukes or princes may look down on him, he who sets the whole universe an example of providence, industry, perseverance, ingenuity, scholarship, integrity, diligence, enterprise and daring, he who achieves this then ventures to—give so perfect a dinner as this one!

THE YOUNG MAN

*Stupendous! Hoch! Hoch!*

*(The men rise to their feet and join in a round of champagne. The ladies shrilly applaud. The Gypsies fall upon their fiddles energetically. The Lackeys bring in more bottles.)*

THE DOCTOR

*(Having refreshed himself with a swallow.)* Well, I must be brief. You don't want a long speech.

*(Cries of "Go on!")*

THE DOCTOR

The hour is late. Many other gentlemen are waiting to be heard—all of them more eloquent than I am. But before I close, permit me to ask you a riddle. What is the difference between Bismarck and the son of our host?

*(Various guesses, but finally they give it up.)*

THE HOST

Well, what is the difference between Bismarck and my son?

THE DOCTOR

Bismarck had a life rich with deeds, and Ludwig has a father rich indeed!  
*(Loud laughter, but The Young Man dissents.)*

THE YOUNG MAN

Oh, I say, that one's a chestnut. Look here: I have it in my notebook. I heard it at the—

*(He pulls out his notebook, and turns the leaves hastily, but the Doctor goes on.)*

THE DOCTOR

Well, if it's an old one, then I'll say something new. Long live our honored host, and his accomplished and beautiful—

*(He is drowned out by the applause. More music from the Gypsies.)*

THE YOUNG MAN

Now for the Privy Councillor! *Hoch!*

THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

I beg pardon. First we must hear from our host.

THE HOST

By no means. You have the floor.  
*(Applause as he rises. He stands a moment, clearing his throat.)*

THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

Ladies and gentlemen, I—

THE YOUNG MAN

Bravo!

THE DOCTOR

Silence!

THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

As I say, I had no idea, when I came here, that I should be called upon to speak in this illustrious and brilliant company, especially after so eminent and eloquent a speaker as our good friend, the distinguished and witty doctor. His humor has convulsed us all.

I am sure that the rest of you feel as I do: that after such incomparable epigrams it is a sad let-down to have to listen to so dull a speaker as I am. But here I am, on my legs. Well, in lieu of a speech, I propose something even better than a toast. I propose three cheers for our lovely and amiable hostess. *Hoch!*

(*A great racket, with vociferous Hochs. Someone upsets a carafe. The Gypsies break into a wild Hungarian dance. Pledges across the table.*)

#### THE DOCTOR

Mr. Chairman, I second the motion. *Hoch!*

#### THE DOCTOR'S WIFE

(*Warningly.*) Joseph!

#### THE YOUNG MAN

Hurrah for all millionaires!

#### THE HOST

(*Rising.*) Ladies and gentlemen—  
(*But there is so much noise that, for a moment or two, he can't proceed. He smiles amiably as his guests lift their glasses to him, and shout at him across the table. Finally, the tumult subsides, the Lackeys shut off the Gypsies, who have begun to fiddle again, and he goes on. He is a man of 50, very elegant, very quiet in manner, and yet somewhat hard. He seems, as he stands before his guests, a trifle nervous. He has drunk less than the other men, and so speaks with greater ease.*)

#### THE HOST

My dear friends, I thank you all most humbly and gratefully. I fear you do me too much honor. The words of praise that have been spoken here—here in my own house, before my dear wife—are overwhelming. I can't tell you how much I appreciate them, and I shall not try. Instead, perhaps I may interest you for a moment with a trifling reminiscence.

#### VARIOUS GUESTS

Excellent! *Hoch!*

#### THE HOST

Ladies and gentlemen, today is the 31st of March. Well, just thirty years ago, on that very day, a poor boy walked into Buda-Pest from the little country-town of Miskolcz—walked the whole thirty miles because he hadn't the money to pay his railroad fare. That boy, my friends, was I.

(*Great applause. Just as it rises a Lackey appears in the far salon—the one with the mirror—and comes hurriedly toward the dining-room. He goes to the chair of The Hostess, and whispers to her. She looks flustered, rises without a word, and follows him out of the room.*)

#### VARIOUS GUESTS

Bravo! *Hoch! Hoch!*

#### THE HOST

(*Not noticing his wife's departure.*) Yes, my friends, I was that boy. I came to Buda-Pest with exactly eight kreutzer in my pocket. With no capital save those eight kreutzer I went to work. With those eight kreutzer, ladies and gentlemen, I—

(*Suddenly The Hostess again becomes visible in the far salon. As she starts toward the dining-room, it is seen that she is followed by three strange men in overcoats, their hats in their hands. Behind them stalks the Lackey. All five come forward without attracting the attention of the company around the dinner-table. At the entrance to the dining-room the three strangers halt, and The Hostess comes forward alone. The Hostess goes to her place at the table, but does not sit down. Instead, she grasps the back of her chair nervously, and seems to be trying to attract the eye of her husband. Two of the three strangers now tiptoe through the salons the way they came, and pass out of sight. But one remains. The Hostess eyes him furiously and with visible agitation. Well she may. He is The Police Agent, and he has come for The Host.*)

#### THE HOST

(*Continuing.*) With those eight



*kreutzer*, ladies and gentlemen, I laid the foundations of the business that has become one of the largest industrial enterprises in Hungary—an industry employing ten thousand men, and making use of a capital of—

(*At this moment, he notices his wife. Her obvious agitation halts his speech. The guests crane their necks to see what is afoot.*)

THE HOST

(*To his wife.*) What is it, my dear? (*She makes as if to speak, but the words will not come. The Lackey goes to The Host and whispers to him. Profound silence. Some of the guests begin to look alarmed.*)

THE HOST

(*Turning so that he sees The Police Agent, and apparently greatly alarmed.*) But I don't understand. . . . Why in the world—? . . . At such a moment! . . . Here—and now! I—

THE POLICE AGENT

(*Comes forward with the heavy, solemn air of an undertaker at a funeral. A large man with a heavy ram's-horn mustache. Bows formally to the company.*) I beg pardon.

THE HOST

Really, I don't understand. . . .

THE POLICE AGENT

You will pardon me, I am sure, I certainly don't intend, in this company—

THE HOST

There is absolutely no reason to—

THE POLICE AGENT

My name is Farkas. I am from the police office. I have the honor to request you, *Herr Direktor*, to be so kind as to— (*A pause.*) I have a taxicab waiting downstairs. (*So m e w h a t abashed by the heavy silence, and the stares of the company.*) My instructions are to be very polite. Perhaps you will do me the honor to—let me help you on with your overcoat.

(*He steps back, evidently relieved that his speech is over.*)

THE HOST

(*In a sepulchral voice.*) My overcoat!

THE YOUNG MAN

Well, I'll be damned!

(*The tension broken, all of the guests begin to chatter excitedly. In the midst of the hubbub, the voice of The Hostess is heard.*)

THE HOSTESS

(*Trying to pass it off lightly.*) Oh, I suppose the Police President wants you to give him some information. The idea! Why doesn't he come here and get it? (*Hysterically.*) They are always bothering my poor husband with all sorts of requests. To think of breaking up a dinner-party in such a way!

THE DOCTOR

The police are infernally impertinent.

THE YOUNG MAN

Tell him to go to the devil.

THE HOST

(*Recovering his manner; to the Police Agent.*) At such a time, I am sure, the Police President will—

THE POLICE AGENT

(*With the stupid doggedness of the policeman.*) I have no authority, *Herr Direktor*, to argue with you. My orders are orders. I was told to come here and—

THE HOST

(*In a panic.*) Do you mean to say that you were sent here to arrest me?

THE POLICE AGENT

Call it whatever you please. My orders are to come here and get you. Whether you are locked up or not—that is the affair of the Police President. All I know is that I am to bring you back at once.

THE YOUNG MAN  
*Kolossal!*

THE POLICE AGENT  
And while I am taking you back, my two men are to search the house.  
*(Profound sensation. A couple of the women cry out hysterically. The men try to calm them. The Lackeys stand about goggle-eyed. The Gypsies, alarmed by the news that the visitor is a policeman, quietly sneak out.)*

THE HOST  
*(Aghast.)* To search my house!

THE POLICE AGENT  
Yes, sir. *(Reaching into his inside coat-pocket.)* Here is the search-warrant, all made out properly. Do you want me to read it to you?

THE YOUNG MAN  
Well, I'll be—

THE HOST  
I am not familiar with the law, but it seems to me an outrage that the police can come into a man's house when he has guests at his table, and interrupt him without ceremony, and order him to—

THE HOSTESS  
*(In strained, nervous tones.)* Oh, don't take it so seriously. It's some stupid blunder, you may be sure. Put on your overcoat and go with the man. We'll wait here until you come back.

THE HOST  
*(He is at the point of collapse, but conceals the fact by a great effort.)* Very well, my dear. Certainly. But I hope no one here imagines for a moment that— The fact is, I am so astounded that I scarcely know what to say. In all my career, no one has ever dared to whisper a word against— This is an outrage! I call upon you all to witness it. In my own house! In the presence of my guests!

THE POLICE AGENT  
Well, I can't argue about it. When I get orders, I carry them out.

THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR  
*(To the Host.)* You may rest assured that we all—

THE HOSTESS  
*(To the company.)* Please don't be nervous! Please don't be nervous! Please don't be—  
*(A break in her voice.)*

THE POLICE AGENT  
Are you ready, Herr Direktor?

THE HOST  
*(Shoves his chair under the table, and stands straight.)* I call upon everyone to bear witness that I make no resistance. I am a law-abiding man. I protest, but I submit. . . . But in the presence of my guests! Certainly a man would be almost justified in— However, let us all be calm. We live in amazing times. To think of it—that a reputable man should be seized in his house, in the very bosom of his family, with his guests all around him—!

THE POLICE AGENT  
*(Expansively.)* A few moments don't matter. If the Herr Direktor desires to pull himself together—  
*(He starts to tiptoe back to the door, his hat still in his hand. In the profound silence his shoes squeak hideously.)*

THE HOST  
*(Testily.)* By no means. I am quite ready. *(A sudden change of tone.)* Really, I can't imagine— *(As if struck by a thought.)* Certainly, it can't have anything to do with that lumber contract. *(To The Doctor.)* I give you my word, Doctor, the Government positively begged me to take it. No one else could swing it. I put millions of my own money into it. Surely the Government doesn't expect a man to do that, and then make no profit. I leave it to you.

THE DOCTOR  
*(Somewhat hastily.)* I'm sorry, but I know absolutely nothing of such matters. A man in my position—

## THE HOST

It was only last February, at the dinner given by our excellent friend—

## THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR'S WIFE

(Flustered by his glance at her.) Are you sure? At my dinner? I remember no discussion of Government contracts.

## THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

(To his wife.) You know nothing of such matters. The Herr Direktor is simply mistaken.

## THE HOST

The doctor—

## THE DOCTOR

Please leave me out of it.

## THE DOCTOR'S WIFE

(Truculently.) How could my husband know anything about such—

## THE DOCTOR

(Warningly.) My dear!  
(The Doctor's wife turns to The Privy Councillor's Wife, and they whisper with apparent indignation.)

## THE HOST

(To The Privy Councillor's Wife.) You will remember, at your dinner, that—

## THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR'S WIFE

(Now frankly rude.) I remember nothing of the sort.

## THE HOST

But certainly you haven't forgotten what—

## THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

(On his dignity.) My wife says that she doesn't remember. Let that be sufficient.

## THE HOST

(Argumentatively.) But I simply wanted to recall something that she had said herself.

## THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

(To his wife, in alarm.) That you said yourself? What nonsense!

(He seizes his wife's arm, and starts toward the door with her. All the others at the table now rise, and prepare to depart.)

## THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

(Turning.) All I desire to say is this: I am an officer of the Government, and sometimes my advice is asked in forestry affairs. But I am certainly not responsible for every word spoken at a dinner given by my wife.

## THE HOST

(Angrily.) I was not addressing you.

## THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

I am glad to know it.

(He turns his back, and proceeds with his wife toward the door. The Young Man rises, and makes as if to follow them. He is halted by the Hostess.)

## THE HOSTESS

Surely you are not going already?

## THE YOUNG MAN

Awfully sorry, really. But as I told you before, I have a most important engagement at ten thirty. (Takes out his watch and glances at it.) I scarcely have time to—

## THE HOSTESS

You said eleven thirty.

## THE YOUNG MAN

Oh, you misunderstood me. Ten thirty, on my word. I'm so sorry I must go. A delightful evening.

## THE POLICE AGENT

(From the door, where he has held up The Privy Councillor and his wife.) No one may leave until the house has been searched.

## THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

But this is an outrage! What have I to do with the—

## THE DOCTOR

(Belligerently.) I refuse to submit to any such order. Where is your

warrant? Am I accused of anything?  
(*He sweeps the company with defiant eye*). I dare anyone to so much as whisper that I—

THE POLICE AGENT

I can only obey my orders. No one may leave until the house is searched.

THE YOUNG MAN

(*Philosophically.*) Oh, very well. But get to work, then. I have an engagement.

THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

(*Violently.*) I absolutely refuse to submit to any such outrage. Do you dare to stand here and argue that I am a criminal, too? Well, this is what one gets for—

THE HOST

(*Challengingly.*) For what?

THE HOSTESS

(*Trying to make peace.*) My dear!  
(*Suddenly her strength fails, and she begins to sway. She covers her face with her hands.*)

THE HOST

(*At her side.*) My poor girl! (*To a Lackey.*) Water!

(*The Lackey is about to make off, but The Hostess detains him.*)

THE HOSTESS

Never mind. It is nothing. I am all right now.

THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR'S WIFE

(*To her husband.*) Are we going now?

THE POLICE AGENT

(*Peremptorily.*) I'm sorry, but you must remain. No one present must leave the house until it is searched. Those are my orders. Anyone who resists is liable to arrest.

THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

(*In a great rage.*) For this you will face me tomorrow.

THE DOCTOR

I am an officer of the Government. I defy anyone—

THE YOUNG MAN

Kolossal!

THE POLICE AGENT

(*To the Lackey.*) Bring his hat and overcoat.

(*The Lackey goes out. An uncomfortable silence. He returns at once with the coat and hat. He holds the coat for The Host, but the latter insists upon struggling into it unaided.*)

THE POLICE AGENT

(*Idiotically.*) Give him his hat.  
(*The Lackey claps it on the Host's head.*)

THE HOST

(*Trying to muster up courage.*) Now we can go.

(*He steps back, faces the company, bows profoundly, and then turns toward the door. Suddenly the Police Agent comes down stage, plucks off his false mustache, and strikes an attitude.*)

THE POLICE AGENT

Aha! Presto! Change!

THE HOSTESS

(*Hysterically.*) Julius!

THE HOST

(*Half collapsed.*) Julius!  
(*Julius bursts into a roar of heavy mirth. The Guests, at first paralyzed, finally join in.*)

JULIUS

April fool!

THE DOCTOR

What is it? A joke?

THE PRIVY COUNCILLOR

Who is Julius?

THE YOUNG MAN

(*Hastily returning to his place at the table.*) Superb!

(*The Host collapses into his chair. The Doctor and Privy Councillor re-*

turn to the table. The Lackey rushes up and relieves the Host of his hat and overcoat. From the salon comes another Lackey bearing a tray of coffee and liqueurs.)

THE HOST

(With an effort at good humor.)  
Well, you fooled me.

JULIUS

(Evidently greatly tickled by the success of his joke, and perfectly unconscious of its serious implications.) Well, aren't you going to feed your loving cousin—and after all the trouble he took to give you a show? Wasn't that mustache a cuckoo? I got it from an actor. My own mother wouldn't have recognized me at ten feet. Now for a little nourishment. (To the Lackey.) Fill my trough, boy! And don't think I'm a canary bird! (He reaches out for the hand of the Hostess, and kisses it with a great smack.) So. I'll shake hands with everybody when I have had something to eat.

(He stuffs a napkin into his collar, grabs a knife and fork, and prepares for action.)

JULIUS

When I am hungry I am a bear. I know nobody, and have no friends.

(The Lackey enters with a plate of soup.)

JULIUS

Ah, just the thing!

(He drops knife and fork, seizes a spoon, and falls upon the soup. The other Lackey, bearing the tray of coffee and liqueurs, approaches.)

THE OTHER LACKEY

Black, or with cream?

JULIUS

No coffee yet. I am still a long way from the coffee. But how about a glass of beer?

(The Lackey hurries out to get it, leaving the tray on the table. A third Lackey comes in with a soup tureen, and Julius takes a second helping.)

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JULIUS

Excellent soup. Almost as good as we get in the country. If I was sure of getting it I'd come to Buda-Pest oftener.

(The Lackey comes in with a large seidel of beer.)

JULIUS

Ahhhhh! (He drinks.) Go on talking. Don't mind me. When I am hungry I am tongue-tied. But the rest of you have got down a square meal. Think of poor me! On the train two hours—and just at dinner time. That train up from Miskolcz is the slowest in the world. I could almost walk it faster. (To the Lackey.) Another glass of beer, young fellow. And not so much foam.

(He goes on eating with loud noises. The Guests, some of them still standing, are all very ill at ease. The Hostess tries to come to the rescue.)

THE HOSTESS

(To her husband.) We have all forgotten that you were making a speech. When Julius came in, you—

THE YOUNG MAN

(Weakly.) On with the speech!

THE HOST

I forget what I was saying.

THE HOSTESS

(Trying hard to recover the situation.) You were telling about how you—

THE YOUNG MAN

About coming up from Miskolcz.

THE HOST

(Rising.) Well, as I was saying, it's just thirty years since a barefoot boy walked into Buda-Pest from Miskolcz. (He glances about him uneasily. The Doctor and his wife and The Privy Councillor and his wife are still standing by the door. An uncomfortable pause.) That boy, ladies and gentlemen, was I.

(Suddenly he sinks to his chair and



buries his face in his hands. The Hostess arises in alarm, but does not move from her place. The silence almost crawls. Finally, The Doctor and his wife slip out of the room and proceed down the long line of salons, passing out of sight at the end. The Privy Councillor and his wife follow them. The Young Man, rising uncertainly, goes to The Hostess, bows and kisses her hand, and then goes out, too. The remaining guests straggle after him. Meanwhile, one of the Lackeys brings in a plate heaped with food, and Julius falls upon it eagerly. The Hostess gazes at him blankly.)

JULIUS

(Noticing the silence.) Well, is that all there is to it? When you came up from Miskolcz, what then? Let us have the whole sad story.

(The Hostess bursts into silent sobs. The Host sinks in his chair. Julius, unheeding, proceeds to stuff himself with food.)

JULIUS

(Suddenly looking up.) Hey, there, boy! Don't forget my coffee.

(One of the Lackeys comes up with the coffee tray, and Julius pours himself a cup.)

JULIUS

Good God, what little cups!

(The Hostess dries her eyes and looks at her husband. She has begun to recover her poise. But he is still crushed. He rises, looks pityingly at Julius, and goes out of the room. Julius eats on. After a moment The Hostess leaves her place and walks slowly to the grand piano in the next salon. She seats herself in sight of the audience, and begins to strike keys at random. Then she starts to play one of the most threadbare waltzes from "The Merry Widow." Julius, delighted, beats time with a fork. At the sixth or eight measure the curtain begins to fall. The waltz is still heard after it is down.)



## When Spring Comes Back

By A. Newberry Choyce

WHEN Spring comes back to the naked thorn  
And the moon swings over the first Spring morn,

I'd rather go alone in the sweet green meads  
Than march with a million and do proud deeds;

I'd rather be dumb and listen to the birds  
Than go through the city and say proud words;

And oh! a lover I'd rather be  
When Spring comes back to the hawthorn tree

Than the proudest king that has ever been told,  
For loving is better than a houseful of gold!



# The Man-Woman

By L. M. Hussey

## I

THESE sisters were opposites, Evelyn and Cora. Evelyn was a gentle creature, not stupid, yet timid in asking a direct question; there were many reservations in her way of living, many refinements. Cora was abrupt; she asked your name and business in the same sentence, and did not hesitate to advise you, with authority.

Cora broke away from the family when she was a young girl. She said they limited her, and she went West to live in her own way. However, it was not the bohemian revolt to which she joined herself; no one ever saw her wearing bobbed hair and a smock or drinking red ink in a literary cellar. She had a polemical and foxy bent and she quickly engaged herself in a lawyer's office.

In time she read the works dedicated to the ornate theories of law, and subsequently learned of its practice, which was another matter. She became a female lawyer. She entered politics. Before the vote was vouchsafed her sex she ranted magnificently at the mass meetings of the suffragettes, she marched in parades, she picketed the White House as the sergeant of a company bearing transparencies. She was a man-despising woman.

When Evelyn married, her honeymoon tour took her through Chicago. She had not seen Cora for ten years, and the Cora she met astonished her. She remembered her sister with the disproportionate recollections of a child; she remembered a thin, tall girl with a severe face, with penetrating, beady eyes, and a frightening way of speech.

The woman she encountered was colossal.

She was an Amazon; she was an overwhelming representative of the third sex. She towered up, taller than most tall men, with a large head, a large, handsome face, and a stare as hard as a fish's. Her voice was not unpleasant—you could imagine it with caressing moments—but it was an authoritative, disputatious voice. She took Evelyn and her husband to her offices, showed them something of her work, entertained them with an austere dinner, and said good-bye without emotion.

"Cora has become a man," the younger sister said to her husband.

She pitied Cora. She envied her none of her achievement. To her these dry, contentious things were futile, even trivial. She was, in those days, alive with the illusions of romance; she indulged sweet moments like a wine; and of this passional life Cora was deprived. It made her shrink to contemplate her sister's unemotional hours.

There was a lapse of seven years until they met again.

One day she received a telegram from her sister, and therein she read an astonishing message.

"Married last Tuesday," she read. "Coming East. Arrive Friday."

The name was signed in full, with her husband's name appended. There could be no error, the wire was indeed from Cora! What an astonishing event!

Evelyn, although she had a sentimental mind, could not adjust this happening to the figures of reality. She fell into reveries, she conceived her sister, at last, yielding to the sweetness of romance, giving herself to kisses like one

long athirst to the waters of a deep spring. But always her memory of Cora intervened, like a material figure walking with phantoms. Seeing Cora in her actuality, she could not imagine her bending to a kiss, nor yielding in languor to a fond caress. This was mysterious; it puzzled her.

In the end, with a sigh for her sentiments, she fixed upon the notion of a marriage of convenience. Cora had consummated an alliance with some elderly lawyer; they made a business transaction; it was a partnership for material advantage.

Nevertheless, she was curious. In the few days that remained before her sister's coming she talked of the affair with her husband; she spoke of it to her two guests in the house, little Ruth Clarke and Mrs. Rushton. Ruth took a romantic view, which was natural to her, and Mrs. Rushton nodded her ancient head in a sapient way, a gesture that curiously annoyed her hostess.

## II

As the car turned into the drive Evelyn ran toward it to greet her sister. Just as she reached the car Cora descended like an Olympian and received Evelyn into a titanic embrace.

A man emerged from the car, younger and smaller than Cora, and she now indicated him with an expansive gesture. Her voice took on a sensational color and she said:

"Dear sister, this is Harry; this is my husband!"

The young man smiled; Evelyn extended her hands and greeted him cordially. In the same instant her eyes swept over him in a comprehensive glance that betrayed her suppressed curiosity. This was Cora's husband! She had conceived him in every reasonable guise and type, but now, meeting him at last, his youth and his good looks amazed her. How had Cora achieved this capture?

They went up the walk together, approaching a young girl and an older woman who stood waiting on the porch.

Both wore the benignant and somewhat bantering smiles that are accorded to honeymooners.

"These are my two guests," said Evelyn. "Miss Clarke and Mrs. Rushton."

Cora bowed from a height.

"My husband and I are happy to know you both," she said.

They proceeded into the house. Evelyn accompanied her sister and new brother-in-law up to their room. Ascending the stairs, Cora leaned upon the arm of her husband. Following behind, the younger woman stared with rounded eyes at these tender ways, this confiding pose. Already, though she was deeply puzzled, the marriage amused her. Cora's pride in her man was astonishing; her naïve affectations were comic.

As they entered the bedroom, the bride turned abruptly, seized the hands of her husband, squeezed them until his face grew a little red, and, bending down, smacked his lips with a tonous kiss. He blushed; she smoothed his cheek with her capacious hand.

"Evelyn, what do you think of my boy?" she asked. "What do you think of my little kitten? Is there anyone like him in the world? Did you ever see such a pretty fellow?"

The hostess covered her confusion with a gentle laugh.

"I'll leave you here to change your things," she said. "We'll be waiting for you downstairs. There's plenty of time. More than an hour until dinner."

She stepped out of the room, and as she walked through the hall she heard her sister, in her surprising new voice, gurgling endearments like a tremendous dove. Just as she reached the stairs a silence fell; it terminated in the noise of an explosive kiss. Her mild eyes widened in perplexity. What an unreal disclosure! The married Cora was an amazing creature. And by what means had she secured her man? In her innocence Evelyn could not understand.

During the dinner hour she almost forgot her amiable duties in watching Cora and the young man. Cora was shamelessly infatuated; it was absorbing to watch her, and at the same time un-

comfortable. She ogled her prize like a colossal houri, she grasped his hands, she pinched his legs, she called him incredible, honeyed names. In this there was something unnatural, like an anachronism, an old woman playing Juliet, the sweet maid. Evelyn was a little ashamed.

She glanced at her husband and then at her guests. Little Ruth did not conceal her smiles, and now and then she laughed for a moment; her short, yellow hair shook with her laughter. Mrs. Rushton stared at the couple with hard, salacious eyes. It was plain that, to herself, she was explaining these love birds in terms of her unpleasant cynicisms. Evelyn was irritated. She disliked Mrs. Rushton. She wished, indeed, that both her guests had gone from the house before the coming of Cora.

Cora's young man interested her no less than the bride. He took the lavish endearments, the eye-rollings, the love-kicks under the table with a remarkable stoicism, like a martyr enduring much for a high faith. He was not disconcerted. He did not seem ashamed. There was a degree of boldness in his manner. Now and then, it seemed to Evelyn, he turned, for an instant, a cynical eye upon the others at the table.

Toward the end of the meal Evelyn's husband managed to interest Cora by a legal question. For the first time during the dinner hour her Harry was free to speak to someone else. He turned to Ruth, who sat at his other hand, and asked her some conversation-making question. She looked at him with amusement in her eyes, which he disregarded, but she replied in a conventional way. They began to talk. The young man's personality seemed to emerge, like an animal that came out from cover. He lost his stoic expression. He smiled and his brown eyes grew a little softer. There was something confidential in his manner. Ruth must have felt the change in him, for she looked at him now with puzzled eyes.

With a little shock of consternation it suddenly came to Evelyn that Cora

might dislike the swift, easy intimacy between Harry and the young girl. That would be unreasonable, but her sister no longer acted with reason. Of her anything might now be expected, even the rage of an unreasonable jealousy. She was living a sort of amorous melodrama, and she was equal to the whole rôle, the whole fantastic part. It was distressing!

Cora, interrupting her conversation, turned to look at her Harry. The younger sister drew in an apprehensive breath. But Cora only smiled an immense, tender smile, and turned once more to Evelyn's husband. The hostess breathed easily again. A genuine crisis, absurd yet real, seemed to have passed. After all, Cora's madness might not take the form of demanding each of the young man's glances for herself, and all his words for her ear alone. She was, Evelyn realized, a proud and assured character. Her success in a masculine world had given her arrogance. Perhaps she was too self-esteeming for small, outrageous jealousies.

They arose from the table. Twilight had come, the sun was down, a red bar circled the sky like the pigmented sweep of an immense brush. The company wandered out to the porch. Cora was still talking to Walter.

Evelyn went back into the kitchen and spoke for a few minutes with her cook. Passing through the dining-room she was about to enter the living-room when she heard Cora's young man speaking in a low voice. She hesitated, just outside the door.

"You were laughing at me," he said.

She heard the girl, Ruth, make some confused denial.

"Yes," he repeated, "I saw you. Don't blame you, Miss Clarke. My wife's a little too chickenish, maybe. But don't think me too much of a boob, please!"

"Why are you saying this? You shouldn't say this to me! I hardly know you. . . ."

"We're going to know each other!"

Evelyn heard the girl's confused laugh; the screen door opened and closed. Evelyn walked into the living-

room. The young man was now alone in the room. He struck a match, lighted a cigarette, and the short flare revealed a little smile on his lips.

### III

CORA'S unexpected summons to Chicago precipitated the delicate and unpleasant train of events in which, in a measure, Evelyn was a participant. Cora believed that the unexpected tangle involving one of her clients would interrupt her honeymooning for about a week; going back on business, she sacrificed her new sentimentalities, and her mind resumed its habit of hard calculation.

"Harry and I are going on to Canada," she told Evelyn. "He could go back with me to Chic, and we might leave for Quebec from there, but I won't do that. It's a week I'll be separated from him; but in the way I feel now, if he's around me, I won't be able to do any work. I'll leave him here. You'll entertain him for a week, Eva?"

She consented, of course, but she consented with a misgiving. Having observed Harry, she understood him better, and she mistrusted him. Now, under her own roof, there resided the potential actors in a drama from which her sensitiveness made her shrink. Little Ruth Clarke had an empty head and the most facile emotions; Evelyn wondered why the girl had appealed to her. Mrs. Rushton would feed like a vulture upon a scandal. And Harry—was an adventurer.

She understood him now. He endured the ponderous lovemaking of his elderly wife because of an emphatic material advantage. Cora was a wealthy woman; the young man certainly had no money of his own. But in giving himself, like a sacrificial offering, to the satisfaction of her belated emotions, he made a very considerable reservation. It was plain to Evelyn that he proposed to find an emotional life all his own. Any pair of young eyes set in a provocative face would interest him. Today it was Ruth; tomorrow the name and person would change.

Contact with such a person was distasteful to those qualities in Evelyn that were a product of her deep illusions. She was still in love with Walter and so she took the business of love very seriously; it was a sacrament. She did not like the casual lover, the incidental kiss. A Don Juan and one of his complaisant ladies, within her own household, offended her fundamental proprieties. Yet she was helpless.

In the beginning she tried to persuade herself that Harry intended no amorous approach to Ruth and that the girl did not regard him in an emotional way. She discounted their smiles, their low-voiced conversations, their walks together in the gardens, along the country roads. She tried to protect her sensibilities by closing her eyes.

But the facts would not protect her. Two days after Cora's departure she saw Ruth in the young man's arms.

It was late in the evening, after she had gone to bed. On some vague tree a screech-owl whinnied and the melancholy, wavering call awakened her. She lay in bed, half in sleep again, when she grew aware of voices, entering in through her window. A curiosity made her arise and go to the window.

Here she stood for a time looking out at the woods beyond the lawn, pleased with their apparent distance, the mystery of their shadows, and the moonlight giving them uncertain outline. Then, again, the murmured voices arrested her ear. She looked down, below her window, upon the lawn.

Cora's young husband was standing there, and close to him, her arm passed beneath his, was the girl, Ruth. Now her yellow hair was a part of the moonlight, and her white face was as pale as silver. For an instant the romance of their attitude, the setting of their amorous pose, appealed to Evelyn as by an instinct. In that moment, connecting them with no other person and no consequences, they produced a sense of mild sadness in her heart, a sort of sweet longing. She saw Ruth turn her face to the man; he bent down to her upturned face and kissed her.



As his lips lingered upon the lips of the girl, Evelyn stiffened with the knowledge of a definite discovery. An impulsive anger made her pull back the screen, as if she intended to lean out of the window to speak to the philanthropists. They placed her in an abominable position; she resented their effrontery.

But her eye was attracted by a movement some yards behind them. A figure walked silently along the border of the shrubbery, crossed hurriedly, unseen by the lovers, over a patch of the lawn, and Evelyn saw a familiar gauze scarf floating for a second in the moonlight. It was Mrs. Rushton. She had not yet retired. She, too, had observed the young man and the girl.

Evelyn withdrew from the window. She sat on the edge of her bed, contemplating her problem. It resolved itself into a question of duty, but the resolution of that duty was not made clear to her.

She thought that she would write to Cora and tell what she had seen, but a kind of pity restrained her. For the first time she found herself a little in sympathy with Cora's romance, however ridiculous it might seem. She understood that her sister was feeling, out of time, too late, all the passionate emotions that would have been natural to her in youth. She saw Cora more humanly since she discovered her weakness. Very soon, because she had embraced it too late, the older woman would come to the end of her illusion. Evelyn could not take it from her!

She lay down in bed, troubled now because the other woman had also seen the philandering kiss, the Rushton woman. She longed for a harsher nature, so that she could go down in the morning and tell all these people to leave her house, the old woman with her scandal-searching eyes, the girl who accepted a week's adventure without any restraining pity, and the man, a sort of male mistress to Cora. She went to sleep and her perplexities became troubled dreams.

At the breakfast table she found it

hard to talk lightly, to pretend ignorance. Ruth was alive with smiles; Harry attended her with an obvious gallantry. Evelyn glanced at Mrs. Rushton. Her face was desiccated; her lips were set in a stiff curve that was half a smile and half a grimace.

Suddenly Evelyn feared Mrs. Rushton. She watched her as if she expected in that moment some outrageous, ungentle act. Nothing happened.

Ruth and Harry arose.

"We're going sailing," said Harry.

He did not inquire if either of the others desired to go. Ruth smiled. They left the room together. Evelyn followed Mrs. Rushton to the porch.

"I was looking out of my window last night," she said.

The old woman glanced at her quickly. Her small eyes, a little beady, grew searching.

"It's very silly," said Evelyn, "for a woman in middle age to hope for the constant affection of a young man. Don't you think so? Perhaps my sister Cora has made a great mistake. But often it does a great harm to point out a mistake too soon. You scarcely know my sister, Mrs. Rushton. She's a strange woman; she has a very proud soul. It's better to leave such a person to her own discoveries. Don't you understand me?"

The old woman smiled. There seemed to be something catlike in her smile—that neat drawing back of a cat's lips in a moment of assassination.

"Dear," she said. "I don't know whether I do or not. One has a certain duty."

"There are so many duties. It's hard to be certain of duty."

Mrs. Rushton shook her head a little. She did not reply.

Later in the day, near the luncheon hour, Evelyn sat again with her guest watching Ruth and Cora's husband approach the house from the road. They walked with a swing, they laughed together, they smiled into each other's faces. They seemed to laugh and smile at each other like people who recall, one to the other, the stir of recent delights.

## IV

CORA's work dragged on a little longer than she expected. On a particular morning she hurried to her office, took up her mail, called in her stenographer and, opening the letters with an efficient sliding thrust of a slim stiletto, she prepared for dictation.

She scanned each letter with a swift eye, placing one upon another at her right hand. Finally she slit the top of a smaller envelope and opened a note written with pen and ink. She read a line or two, stiffened a little, turned the page abruptly and looked hard at the signature. Then she stood up.

"I find I'm not quite ready yet," she said to her stenographer. "You can go back to your desk for a little while."

The girl tripped out of the room.

Cora sat down again.

Then, line by line, she read the appalling letter:

"I feel it my duty," wrote her informant, "to tell you about the conduct of your husband and one of the young guests under your sister's roof. I will not tell you who I am, but you can easily discover the truth of what I write.

"I don't understand how a sister with any heart, or any sense of duty, could see you shamed and keep silent. She makes herself a party to the deception. The best thing for you, Mrs. Copeland, is to come East at once and surprise your young husband in his guilt.

"I write this as a friend, and I sign myself,

"A FRIEND."

Cora placed the letter upon her desk. Her face had whitened, but now the color returned to it, ruddy, suffusing, tinting her yellowish skin with an unwanted carmine. Her hands, lying upon the desk, drew themselves tightly into fists, and the knuckles stood out whitely. Her pride arose to defend her, and with this a bright anger. She found herself less angry with Harry than with Evelyn, who had indeed betrayed her. She almost believed that Evelyn had helped in this thing. It seemed to her that Evelyn must be jealous of her happiness.

Then, reaching for the telephone, she dictated a telegram to her sister:

"Anonymous letter received this morning. Do not know writer. Astonishing news about Harry. Tell me the truth at once."

She pushed back the telephone and sat at her desk, struggling with strange, new emotions of shame and defeat. But, in the end, her anger and her hard pride sustained her. She rang for her stenographer and in a stiff voice began to dictate.

The telegram reached Evelyn a few hours later. She read it with a profound consternation. The certainty that Mrs. Rushton had written the letter was a secondary matter; she put the old woman out of her mind. What could she write to Cora? Could she deny what had been written? Would that sort of lying serve any purpose?

She tried to conceive Cora's reaction, Cora's mood. Then, little by little, she determined on telling the truth. Whenever discovery came to Cora it would come with a shock, and now it mattered not how she had reacted to the Rushton letter, she had felt a part of that shock. There was no mercy then in concealing the truth any longer.

So she sat at her desk and wrote painfully to her sister, telling all she knew and had seen. She explained her own silence by saying that it seemed best that discovery should come through Cora's own eyes. She said what she felt of Harry.

"It's better that you know the truth about him so quickly," she wrote. "He is unworthy of you, Cora."

## V

CORA sat with her sister's letter in her lap. It was evening on the day following its receipt. Now she read it again. She had read it a score of times.

Her first act, when the letter came, was to wire Copeland, a commanding wire, a command to come to Chicago. She wired him in the flush of her bitter anger. She wanted him at once, to wither him, to destroy him, to turn him out on the streets like a dog. She felt that she would shake him until his teeth

rattled in his jaws; she'd force him to his knees and make him howl for mercy.

Then, little by little, her hardness subsided, the hurt of her pride was dulled, and a strange numbness came into her spirit. Memories returned to her, the recent memories, the new emotions, so long unfelt in her life. She regretted her youth with a dull, profound regret. She scorned her hard successes. The lives of other women, the common lives, that all her life she had scorned, she envied now. She felt that she had lived out of accord with nature and that nature was avenging herself.

Seated in the chair, an immense wanting took hold of her. It seized her in the way her early ambitions had come to her, with domination, with a great strength. She wanted her man! All the other wanted things she had claimed for herself, and now her sole want was this one. It had come to her late, but it moved her now like something strong, like the genius of a magic bottle, grow-

ing potent by the years' suppression.

Cora sprang out of her chair. She would claim what was hers by a fiat of will! She stood rigidly in the center of the room, speaking aloud, making a supreme denial.

"It is not true," she said slowly. "It is a lie!"

With flushed cheeks she strode to her writing-desk. On a sheet of letter paper she wrote, with urgent strokes, a letter to her sister:

"Evelyn," *she wrote*, "you cannot destroy my happiness. No jealous tongue shall separate me from my love. I am too strong to be destroyed by conspiracies. I scorn the lies that have been told me. I believe nothing that you have said. He loves me. His love is like untarnished gold. I wait, here for him now, to fold him into my arms. He is my lover. He comes to me!"

She leaned back in her chair with glowing eyes. She waited, with an immense eagerness, for the coming of her lover. She waited to enfold him in a colossal, hungering embrace.



## Song

By Mary Carolyn Davies

**B**ECAUSE I love, I weep,  
Because I grieve, I sing:  
Of all things, only sleep  
Is a desired thing.

Denied or given, deep  
Love thrusts its poisoned sting.  
Of all things, only sleep  
Is a desired thing.



**F**RENCH farce as presented in New York: a cocktail served in a slop jar.



# Lost Sunsets

By George Sterling

*THE hills are gold and gray. A random wind  
Ruffles the shifting silver of the stream.  
Summer has dreamt her dream,  
Departing for a Land she shall not find.*

*Some hint of beauty that could never be  
Haunts for a little the deserted bay.  
One more farewell of day  
Makes mournful now the shoreline of the sea.*

*Voices unheard seem calling from the West,  
Prophetic of some sorrow of the sky,  
And wings unseen go by,  
Flown oceanward upon a secret quest.*

*The sea-horizon draws awhile more near,  
And crystal for the lost, unhappy rain  
Is autumn's air again,  
Hushed with accusing memories of the year.*

*So pale and clear the cloudless day goes down!  
Where the gray deep lies desolate and chill,  
One waits, recalling still  
The time when two saw wilder sunsets drown.*



A MAN'S appointed task is prying another man loose from his money.  
A woman's is prying another woman loose from her secrets.



MEN enthuse over heads; women over hats.



# The Love Charm

By Marjorie Anne Mortland

I

MISS PRACE stood looking out of the window of the high-school library. She was waiting for the fourth period bell to ring, and trying to decide whether to go to her classroom on the second floor by way of the north stairway or the south. For the last two days she had chosen the south, and had *not* happened to meet Mr. Heywood on his way to the one class in Economics that he taught. Should she try the south stairway once more or change to the north? She determined to take the north.

Miss Prace was thirty-five and had never been kissed. She looked it. Years—several years—devoted to analyzing all the vital beauty out of *Ivanhoe* and *Macbeth* for the quaking literature students of West High had stiffened her manner and sharpened her voice as well as her features. Her simplest remarks had an inescapably pedagogical flavor. And there was an uncompromising angularity about Miss Prace. Her hands looked knobbly in gloves; the mechanics of her feet made themselves apparent in kid shoes. She possessed long-sleeved underwear, cotton hose, high-collared detachable net yokes, and she wore corset covers instead of camisoles. All women (and most men) know what that means in this day and age. On the whole, she was no more suggestive of romance than a muffin tin.

Until Sidney Heywood, who was ornamentally thirty, with crisp black hair and a quite involuntary way with women, replaced old Mr. Henzias as

principal of West High School, her life had maintained the meticulous tenor of its unexciting way. That is, she attended the symphony concerts, the Hills Presbyterian Church, Zueblin's lectures, Shakesperian performances (with her mother or Miss Haight of East High, Miss Dain of Central, or Miss Woods of West), read papers at the meetings of her study club and subscribed to the *Atlantic Monthly*. Two or more weeks of every summer she spent at some lake resort with Miss Woods, Miss Dain or Miss Haight, doing fancy work, taking walks, complaining of the meals, rowing up and down the lake, splashing about in a decorously ample bathing suit, and reading Mr. Winston Churchill's novels. She had been personally conducted through the more accessible parts of pre-war Europe.

Then came Heywood. Heywood's coming usually meant something to some woman. He had just left a very comfortable boarding-house on Blaisdell Avenue, because of an emotional young Southern woman whose husband didn't *understand*, for the almost as comfortable security of Mrs. Dean's small house, where nobody boarded except himself. There was, to be sure, Mrs. Dean's daughter Alice, to whom all the heroes in the books she read—whatever the authors' intentions—suggested Mr. Heywood. But she worshipped so unobtrusively afar that he never guessed it. Beyond knowing that she was pleasant to have about, that she kept his room orderly and homelike, baked delicious waffles and played her modest piano repertoire for him when-



ever he asked her to, Heywood was scarcely aware of her.

He was even less aware that, during Miss Prace's first meeting with her new principal, Fate jocularly implanted in her autumnal heart the seed of a belated passion. It had a rank and rapid growth and disturbed her mightily. Sometimes, before, she had known twinges of restive dissatisfaction, a craving for something she had never possessed. But now . . . well, it was like having a vaguely troublesome hunger for sweets which, at sight of some superlatively rich and creamy chocolate, becomes a definite and violent appetite.

The fourth period bell! Hastily Miss Prace snatched a book from the Kipling shelf and started, the long way round, to her Shakespeare class.

Expectant and palpitating, she passed Heywood's classroom door and noticed that he was not there. Therefore he must be on his way.

Just at the foot of the stairs she came upon Janie Burns and Clark Walker, both juniors, gazing at one another with the abandon of which only extreme youth is capable. Janie had annoying, large, dewy eyes and curly hair. Absently patting the newel post, she stood on the first step so that her eyes were on a level with Clark's and as Miss Prace passed them he laid his hand possessively over her restless fingers and kept them still.

Miss Prace frowned. Nobody loves a lover who wants to be one and can't. The little tableau flicked her on the raw as, disappointed and irritated, she reached her own door without a glimpse of her chief.

She seated herself at her desk, text and grade book before her, the groove between her eyes at its deepest. Janie would be late, she thought, watching the door at the rear of the room—so much the worse for Janie. Just as she proceeded to call the roll, that door opened and Heywood himself strode in. The furrow vanished into a line. Her sallow cheeks flushed and she felt warm and jumpy all over, as she always did at

his approach. He hurried to her desk and bent toward her confidentially.

"Pardon me if I interrupt a moment, Miss Prace. I've been looking for you. Will it be convenient for you to come to my office at one-thirty today?"

She flutteringly conveyed that it would not be in the least inconvenient.

"Thank you!" he murmured. "I'll expect you, then." Heywood's voice, like Mr. Pickwick's traducers, could put subtly amorous suggestions into "Chops and potatoes."

Janie Burns, breathless from hurry, rushed in just as he reached the door and collided violently with him, bolted right into his arms, in fact, The class tittered; Janie flushed and dimpled; Heywood smiled, as for the mere fraction of a minute his hand rested on her shoulder.

Janie slid into her seat, thankful that a little commotion had covered her tardiness. Anyhow, she couldn't very well be scolded for coming late to class when, plainly, Mr. Heywood was going late to his. She didn't know, of course, that to see Mr. Heywood smile at her, and touch her, was gall and wormwood, mixed in quinine, to her teacher. Bumping into her principal was nothing in Janie's life. But Miss Prace supposed that *anyone* must be transported into at least the fifth heaven of delight by such a lucky accident. Her tingling pleasure in that low toned "I've been looking for you!" was swept away in acid, covetous rage. When she noticed Janie, so offensively pretty, gazing out of the window in blissful abstraction—thinking of Clark Walker—she supposed the reason to be Mr. Heywood. Anyhow, she knew *Julius Cæsar* had nothing to do with it.

"What is the purpose of having Cæsar's ghost appear to Brutus in Act IV, Scene 3, and say, 'I will be with thee at Phillippi'?" Miss Prace demanded, calling upon Janie, who rose trembling to her feet, having heard no more than her name.

Now Janie Burns, as the vernacular had it, was "no shark." She had a sweet disposition, she made wonderful

fudge and danced like a fairy. But she was no shark.

"Well? How long must we wait?"

"I—I'm afraid I didn't hear all the question."

It was repeated in a tone that scared Janie quite out of her wits, literally. So far as she was concerned, Cæsar had no excuse for a ghost.

"Why—er—I think . . . that is . . ."

"Sit down! There is no need to come to class if you cannot get here on time, attend to what is being said, and take some intelligent part in the discussion."

That, however, hurt Janie more than it relieved Miss Prace. What Heywood wanted to consult her about at noon was the reception to be given in May by the Parents' and Teachers' Association—Miss Prace was secretary that year—but she prolonged the interview by delivering a complaint of Janie's behavior in the way of carelessness in class and foolishness with the boys, both of which, Miss Prace said, reflected upon the dignity of the school. Heywood told her he would keep an eye on Janie.

## II

Love, like mumps, goes harder with maturity, especially a first attack. Miss Prace could not bear to think how near was the end of the school year. She felt desperate. The longing to be with Heywood, to be close to him, was becoming an obsession beyond all reason.

But things might have gone on exactly as they were had it not been for a trifling mistake that she herself made. That evening, she discovered, to her annoyance, that the book she snatched from the school library in the morning was *Plain Tales from the Hills*, instead of *The Light That Failed*, which her study club was taking up.

She sat brooding for a while, the book in her lap, and finally, with an effort, opened at random page two-sixty-five, and read *The Bisara of Pooree*. It was the last story in the world to appeal to her ordinarily, but just then it made a strong impression. The bit of verse heading it had, appar-

ently, a provokingly haunting quality. Now, Miss Prace was not superstitious. She never allowed a black cat to cross her path, nor looked at the new moon over her left shoulder, and she disliked the number thirteen. Miss Prace, however, despised superstition.

Her mother, knitting on the other side of the sitting-room table, saw her stop reading and immediately talked. Mrs. Prace was a little, plump, soft, gentle soul—not clever, but, in her nice deprecatory old-lady way, charming. She had the greatest awe and respect for Abby, who could be so bewilderingly offended by "Somebody left their umbrella in my pew."

"I went through the big trunk in the attic today," she observed pleasantly, "to see that the moths hadn't gotten into that mohair coat of yours. Somehow I was thinking about it, and I felt sure the moths were getting into that mohair coat. But they weren't. I guess it's a good thing I looked, though, because I found this. I always meant to give it to you, Abby. Deary me, how it did bring back the past!"

She held out an old-fashioned brooch, with a large polished agate set in a twist of plain gold.

Miss Prace absently took it.

"Rather pretty and quaint," the answer was perfunctory. "I suppose it is not of much value."

"No, it didn't cost much, but it always seemed to your Aunt Nellie and I that . . ."

"Me, Mother! You would never say, 'It seemed to I'—that should help you to remember."

"To me," hastily, "that it was sort of good luck piece for the women of our family, sure to give us a . . . to bring us something nice. Your grandfather gave it to your grandmother when he asked her to marry him, you see. When your Aunt Nellie was sixteen she begged to wear it one evening, and that turned out to be the happiest night of her life. And I had it on when"—her voice fell and trembled a little—"when your papa proposed to me. We had known each other quite a while—

it was funny—and been just good friends. Then that time, at a dancing party, it was, when I had on a fresh blue poplin dress about the color of this," fingering the hug-me-tight about her shoulders, "something new came into the way we felt, somehow. We . . . we . . . he said he saw, all at once, that I was the sweetheart he had always waited for, and I . . . found out I loved him. It was the first time I wore the agate pin."

She stopped, a little abashed at talking so sentimentally, but brightened to see that her daughter was unwontedly attentive.

"That is very strange," said Miss Prace, looking at the brooch. "But of course the pin could not possibly have had anything to do with it. That is mere superstition."

But her mother was unusually assertive.

"Lots of queer things happen that even wise folks can't explain. We don't know. Something told me so clearly to look for moths in that mohair coat, and when there weren't any, and I saw the pin," timidly, "I . . . I felt almost as though I had been sent to get it for you. It would please me very much, Abby dear, if you would wear it."

"Thank you, Mother. I shall of course be glad to wear it if you want me to, since it meant so much to you and Aunt Nellie. The darker markings just match my brown foulard."

She laid Kipling aside for the last number of the *National Geographic*, but a very able article on *Shattered Capitals of Central America* failed to hold her thought from the "charm of the bisara" and . . .

"Singular coincidence!" mused Miss Prace as she went upstairs to bed.

"Little Blind Fish, thou art marvelous wise,  
Little Blind Fish, who put out thine eyes?  
Open thine ears while I whisper a wish—  
Bring me a lover, thou Little Blind Fish!" . . .

The silly verse rang stubbornly in her head while she undressed, looking at the brooch on her bureau.

### III

BUT that might have been the end of it had not Miss Prace gone into Marsden's the next day to have her Phi Beta Kappa key repaired.

Marsden was an enterprising jeweler. He specialized in novel advertisements. With her bill, Miss Prace was handed a fateful sample of Marsden's latest "line," a brightly colored card picturing agates of various shapes and sizes (Marsden was uncomfortably overstocked with them, having had to take an assortment of agates in payment of a debt) with a paragraph or so of printed matter which, after a glance, she stood still in her tracks to read:

*Adorned with this thy woman's heart shall gain*

*By magic suasion what it would obtain;  
And if of men thou ought demand shall come  
With all thy wish fulfilled rejoicing home.*

A quaint legend of old India relates that the Princess Nadima won the heart of the Rajah Kunsar by bribing his servant to place upon his turban an agate which she had worn for three nights next to her heart. A story of the Eighteenth Century tells of a young Duchess of Queen Anne's court who, ostensibly in jest, fastened an agate brooch, with which she had slept three nights, upon the velvet coat of an indifferent Cavalier. Soon after they were married.

Many such esoteric tales, claiming for the agate magic powers of winning love for the wearer are making this charming semiprecious stone very popular along the boulevards of Paris and among the London nobility. What would be a more welcome gift than one of the novel and elegant specimens which we have succeeded in obtaining. . . .

Miss Prace went her way slowly, in a daze. She was so absent-minded during the day that she forgot to write "Keep" over the test questions for English III (placed on the blackboard late in the afternoon, just before she went home, so that no prowling student could "copy"), and Gus, the janitor, carefully washed them off, with disagreeable consequences to himself. And the next night, when the lights were all turned out, she pinned her mother's talismanic agate to the left side of the cotton nightgown with the crocheted yoke that she

had made the summer before at Madeleine Island. Before morning it pricked her several times, less mystically than Cupid's arrow. But she had dreams of an amazing and intimate ardency about Sidney Heywood, so that, waking, she felt thrilled, exhilarated, buoyant. Her manner developed a new facetiousness and abandon. She laughed often, essayed unaccountable jokes, injecting a colloquial gayety into her speech with astonishing effect.

Miss Prace wore the brooch for five nights, partly for good measure and partly because she could not hit upon a way to affix it to the person of Mr. Heywood. His overcoat seemed the only possibility, and the weather was so warm he seldom wore it. But finally her chance came, with the last Teachers' Meeting of the year but one.

It rained that evening. Mr. Heywood wore his raincoat and left it hanging in his office. During a heated discussion as to whether the term examinations should occupy two and a half hours or be limited to two, Miss Prace, her face scarlet, tiptoed out of the room in the throes of a well-simulated fit of coughing, handkerchief over her mouth, her goal ostensibly the drinking fountain.

Stealthily she entered the principal's office and approached his coat. As she sought the inside left pocket, the feel of the shiny stiff lining, the faint, subtly masculine aroma of soap and talcum and tobacco set her to quivering hotly. She lifted one empty sleeve and held it experimentally around her waist . . . then clumsy, shuffling feet made themselves heard at the door. Gus, the janitor, noted for appearing only when he was not wanted, had chosen that belated moment to empty Mr. Heywood's waste-basket.

In a burning panic, Miss Prace slid the brooch into the pocket, instead of pinning it, as she had intended—she and Gus were not on speaking terms since the little affair of the test questions—and stalked past him with the air of a person who has come to consult the dictionary.

It did not surprise her, when the meeting was finally dismissed, to find Heywood leaving the building at the same time she did, and with no maneuvering on her part, almost as though he had been waiting.

"Miss Prace," he held the door open gallantly, "do we go the same way? I'm headed toward Lake Street."

They did, exactly the same way. Mrs. Dean's house was just a block and a half around the corner from the one in which Miss Prace and her mother lived.

"He seems so *pleased!* He really does see different!" she said to herself, and her heart beat frantically.

At Lake Street, she agreed that it would be far pleasanter to walk along while waiting for a car. Cars are so sticky and close and ill-ventilated on wet nights, really horrid! They started and no car came, as no car usually does on Lake Street. So they walked on, side by side, close together, over the wet sidewalks, with the street lamps glimmering in the puddles. At crossings he put his hand under her elbow—blissful, electric contact! He hoped that the dampness would not aggravate the cough which had driven her out of the meeting! When they came to her home he walked up on the porch with her, took her key and unlocked the door for her.

"Why, Abby!" called her mother's startled, happy voice out of the darkness, "Wasn't that a *man* who came home with you?"

"It was Mr. Heywood," sang out Miss Prace.

When Alice Dean heard him loping upstairs, a few minutes later, she closed her eyes and relaxed with a little sigh. Alice always felt more comfortable after she knew Mr. Heywood was safely in his room, especially on stormy nights. She drifted into slumber, dreaming of a Gavin Dishart who spoke with Heywood's voice and gazed with Heywood's eyes upon a Babbie into whom went more of Alice Dean than Alice realized.

## IV

As for Miss Prace, she could hardly sleep at all that night for provisioning "Abigail Prace Heywood." She saw herself sitting beside him at the Symphony, envied by her colleagues, lovingly escorted in and out of the Auditorium with his hand at her elbow. Fancied him laughing at her sparkling jets of wit, worshipping her strength of character, marveling at her intellect. Pondered a secret ceremony, not to be announced until school was out, then Janie Burns rebelling impertinently in class, unaware that the principal had entered . . . pictured him striding forward with a dark, terrible frown and saying in stern, resonant tones:

"Even if you did not owe some reverence to your English teacher, I should insist upon your showing the proper respect to . . . *my wife* . . . !"

But Heywood plunged into bed without thinking of anything except that he had to get up in the morning. Matrimony he never did think about much. He intended to marry somebody, some time, when he could comfortably afford it. Of course the idea that anybody's good luck piece could possibly marry him by magic would have set him to roaring with laughter.

All unsuspecting, he had been under the spell of the agate about three days, when Miss Prace, on the way to her Shakespeare class, saw him stop short on the opposite side of the corridor, turn, and come toward her as though irresistibly drawn. He told her that he had seen fit to transfer Janie Burns to another English teacher, that he regretted not having done so before. (He did not add that Janie had besought him almost with tears to do so.) And their walk home from Teachers' Meeting was the first of many. They seemed always to be leaving the building at the same time. Wherever she was, there, very frequently, also was he, as people began to notice.

After a final consultation to plan for the reception to be held by the West High Mothers' and Teachers' Associa-

tion, one Saturday noon—and he had on his raincoat, for the morning had been cloudy—they stood talking together so long that Heywood scarcely had time to swallow his lunch before keeping an appointment with Hiram Holden of the School Board. And it was well to be punctual with Holden. He was the power behind Superintendent Ditson's squeaking swivel chair, and salaries waxed and waned according to his prejudices.

So Heywood washed his hands, changed his collar and rushed off, leaving his raincoat in a heap on the chair in his room, one sleeve and the collar dragging forlornly to the floor. Noticing it, when he had gone, Alice Dean came in, straightened his military brushes and hung a discarded necktie on the little wooden branch at the side of the mirror. As she tenderly lifted the coat to shake out the wrinkles and hang it in the closet, Miss Prace's agate brooch slipped from the pocket and fell at her feet.

Alice adored Heywood and adoration is not acquisitive. Although she had never dared to hope he might marry her, the idea of his marrying anybody else turned her weak and cold, now that she considered it for the first time. For she knew that such a piece of jewelry in the possession of Mr. Heywood must mean a woman in the life of Mr. Heywood, probably the owner of one of the feminine voices that called him on the telephone. Alice told herself that the time would soon come when she could no longer do things for him, or play for him, or go walking with him on occasional Sundays. Even to think about him would be wrong. Wondering miserably what sort of wonderful enchantress was so blessed as to own it, Alice picked up the brooch and laid it on the bureau.

She left the front porch when she saw him coming home early that evening and stayed out of sight until he was safely in his room. But a few minutes later he came downstairs, calling her, with the brooch in his hand.

"Is this yours or your mother's?" he



asked. "I found it up in my room."  
 "Why!" gasped Alice, "that doesn't belong to either of us. It was on your floor."

"It was? Good Lord! Where on earth did it come from? Can I be developing kleptomania?" ejaculated Heywood, turning Miss Prace's brooch over and over in his hand. "Oh, I probably picked it up in the halls at school and chucked it into my pocket. Funny I'd forgotten all about it though. Absent-minded old pedagogue!"

"You really didn't buy it for anybody?" cried Alice in a blinding rapture of relief. "And nobody gave it to you?"

"Nope. Can't even recall having seen it before," and Heywood looked up, arrested by the tremor in her voice.

The rosy golden light of a May sunset cast an enhancing glow about her as she stood there, her pastel prettiness set alight by her sudden emotion, and it seemed to Heywood that he had never really looked at her before.

"No, of course not," he smiled. "Did you hope I had?"

"Oh, no," she stammered, with a little gasp of dismay, flushing scarlet. "No, I . . . I just . . ."

Her confusion was even more appealing than the betrayal which had caused

it. A sudden tenderness pierced his heart for this comfortable little Alice, whom he had always taken neglectfully for granted, offering gifts in her tearful eyes and wistful mouth. Impulsively he drew her into his arms and kissed her.

"Why don't you like the idea of my carrying other women's jewelry around?" he asked indulgently.

"Oh, it nearly killed me," she nestled against him with a long, quivering sigh, "because I've always loved you so," lifting humid, worshipful eyes to his, "and I never dreamed . . . how could I know that such a wonderful man as you are would want to marry *me*?"

Heywood had a swift, startled sensation akin to alarm, somewhat as though he had closed a door behind him without noticing the Yale lock. But Alice's hair brushed his cheek softly when she laid her head on his shoulder, and her cherishing young arms were pleasantly tight around his neck. He found it easier to kiss than to answer her questioning lips.

"I know we must advertise it," she whispered, "because it belongs to somebody who is fond of it, probably, but I wish we could keep the funny agate pin. I feel as if it really brought us together, like a love charm."



**L**IFE consists in wanting something. When a man is satisfied he is as good as dead.



**L**OVE begins with holding hands and ends with holding conferences.



# Appreciation

*By Hartley H. Hepler*

**T**HE great emotional screen actress was making her first appearance in vaudeville.

With heaving bosom and streaming eyes she was enacting a scene from her greatest film success—the one that had led the critic on the Gulfport, Miss., *Gazette* to proclaim her a greater actress than Duse.

But the audience was unresponsive, and it appeared that the great actress was doomed to be a frost.

With the determination that had brought her to the front ranks of the celluloid artistes, she redoubled her efforts, and, as the curtain fell, the theatre vibrated with a thunder of applause.

The great artiste had accidentally stepped on the spot where the three performing sea-lions who had preceded her on the bill had splashed water on the stage, and had landed with a resounding thump on her cadenza.



## Two Notes

*By Herschelle Bek*

**O**NCE I heard a great violinist play. . . . Two notes cling ever to my memory. . . .

One of exquisite sweetness . . . as tremulously poignant as a keen-edged razor cutting across the round, white throat of a beautiful woman. . . .

The other, deep and terrible . . . like the crunching of an old woman's bones.



**P**OET: One who has entered the library under the impression that it is the music-room.



# A Shift of Emphasis

By Richard McKeon

I

THE maid was in his room fixing his bed when he opened the door.

He sobered a smile on his lips and crossing the room sat down on the single chair. She would doubtlessly speak to him as she pulled the sheets flat in an attempt to straighten them, and he simulated uninterest behind a newspaper which expectation of her voice closed from his eyes.

She waddled heavily across to the mirror that hung on the wall and with her ancient arm pushed a dirty rag across its surface.

"I'll make sure there are no more complaints about mirrors," she said.

He mouthed an interrogatory noise.

"Yes," she continued, "the man directly below you left a note on his pillow, a note written as big as that," she waved vague hands to an indeterminate size, "as if I was blind. And it said to take better care of his room and to clean the mirror. I didn't touch a thing but just brought the missus right up and showed her the room. And she says, 'No, Maggie,' she says, 'I see nothing the matter with this room. I'll speak to him tonight when he comes in.'"

She applied herself again to the mirror, muttering the while, "He ought to have a special maid; the airs of him in a boarding house," and looking the while for the approbation that was smiled at her over the top of the newspaper.

"Why his mirror was cleaner than this one."

Then she hastened to the annihilation

of an obvious speck that seemed to mock her from its surface.

She took the towel from the washstand and paused to say through the half-open door.

"If he had been there when I got that note I'd have shown him if I have a drop of Irish in my blood."

The door closed.

He threw the newspaper with inaccurate speed across the room onto the washstand and permitted the smile to return to his face. It had taken five years, it was true, but now that they were past it was worth it. He had not aimed high. His ambition was modest, but it had the advantage of being attainable, and now being attained it was pleasing.

He stood up vigorously and walked the length of the room, planting his feet in a full stop before the mirror.

The fixtures for the new store would be bought tomorrow, and the day after he would probably watch the first of them being installed. He would have to see Lieberman in the morning. He would have to wait for him. Half his life was spent waiting for uninteresting people, but much of that was over now. The location of the store was choice, and he had satisfied himself by repeated wanderings in exploration that a shoe store with the proper fostering would flourish there. He would tend it lovingly! Five years of distasteful service under Lieberman had at least this consummate end. To be manager of a branch store!

He inspected his twisted smile in the mirror. To be a mere shoe clerk was in many ways distasteful and certainly

not of the highest dignity. One's very position at the customer's feet and the inferior elevation of the footstool took away that. One abased oneself when one served. There would be, he decided as he moved his head to try another angle in the mirror, no footstools in his store. Clerks would fit the shoes while standing and smile down from the easier superiority of their elevation on those they served. . . .

Dignity was easy, however, in a manager and grace a ready embellishment. He would have three clerks under him, and he would direct their movements in a coat that fit snugly and with finger-nails that were polished. He associated a graceful urbanity inseparably with well-kept finger-nails, and the complete picture of male perfection was suspended from the clotheshanger that draped a well-cut frock coat from the arms of which white hands protruded. He would pace the new carpet of a well-furnished store dropping authority from his lips and grace from his fingertips. Later perhaps he would grow a mustache.

These were worthy heights to have attained. There was no more now but to smile godlike smiles and extend blunt words of placation to irate customers and pointed words of encouragement to complacent ones. About him a finite world would revolve, and he would quicken its revolution with the beck of a head that would move at once in dignity and authority. Decision was his. Where decision weighed he would ponder heavily, and where the judgment was already balanced in one direction, it behooved the completeness of authority to push it roughly to the opposite end.

His mind ran to the details he would control. He would not arrange the stock from left to right as was the Lieberman custom but from the floor to the ceiling. That would be the first innovation. It satisfied him at first by the flat-footed stolidity of its authority. Then he saw advantages that were obvious. He would argue the point with

Lieberman; it was a reform that should be introduced in all the stores.

Then there was the matter of the polishes and the findings. In his store they would not be placed, as Lieberman always placed them, on a table in the front of the store. They would be arranged at the side, and he would suspend a green velvet curtain from a brass rail in the front.

He turned about and sat down on the bed. Rightly were these details a source of delight. They smacked at once of liberation and authority. Both were sweet. Both dictated an exultation that rose in his breast and insisted pressingly that he permit some freer outlet for it from his lips than a smile permitted. It wanted lyric communication. He must tell it to some one. But to whom?

He could not see Charlie tonight because Wednesday was the night he worked late. Moreover Charlie would be solemn and gratulatory. He would not appreciate the song he sang but would speak of salaries and futures and business. They would probably eat together and talk heavily. Such a night would force a stiffness into lips that wanted to smile. No, laughter that appreciated and sang suited more his mood.

A feminine touch would be better. He leaned back against the pillow, resting his head upon his hands and raising his feet upon the bed. But what girl did he know who would match the color of his mood? Or more simply, what girl did he know? There was Elsie, but Elsie was stupid. He could talk to her of anything, but, being Elsie, he might also talk to anything. To the ceiling for example.

But he must talk to some one. Either that or the enthusiasm in him would break into some strange form and he would sing loudly from his bed or dance naked dances grotesquely before the mirror. But that would not satisfy. He had achieved a goal and he must see admiration in some eye, and he could not find sufficient token of it in his own

naked shanks. And his shanks had neither grace nor beauty.

He laughed at the trend his thoughts had taken, and then at the sound of his laughter sat up in bed. If he wished to do anything tonight he must decide. He looked at his watch. It was half past seven. George was not the one to see tonight. He cared nothing for such things. George was sometimes interesting but never distracting. And tonight if he was not to speak about himself, he must at least be distracted. Nor Jack. In fact Jack had probably started off to see Mary before this.

He stood up and put on his hat. There remained only Elsie. Elsie it would be. At least he could speak of anything to Elsie. And he must speak to some one. He cared nothing for Elsie's opinion of him, so it mattered not how he spoke. Elsie was obviously and superficially stupid. Incapable of a judgment that approached truth. And frivolous. He would probably kiss her and in that kiss touch ideals. Not Elsie. But he would talk through her. Elsie at least inspired him to talk well. And graceful words shone like pink fingernails.

In the street the bright refulgence of street lights sanctified his mood and corroborated the cool invigoration of the night air. He breathed a noisy breath and started down the street with a long stride that became self-conscious in a smile that poised the word vigorous. He also swung his arms too much. But that too was excess of vigor and token of complacency and ideals attained.

## II

His thoughts were lugubriously slow as he stepped into the street. Blackness could not be complete. Doubtlessly he had acted stupidly and gracelessly tonight, but what was the import of that? It mattered nothing. Elsie was incapable of sharing his aspirations. That she laughed at him could bear little weight as pertinent criticism. One who does not see the mark is ill-suited to gauge the aim or condemn the shot.

But she had laughed at him. She had restrained her laughter to exclaim, "Oh, what a man!" And she had laughed again. She was stupid.

He stopped and groaned at his thoughts. With both hands in his pockets he resumed his walk. He had not even told her what it was that had motivated his visit. Her laughter had been too quick for that. He had tried to kiss her. And why not? He knew her well enough; he had taken her out some dozen times. Each time he had conducted himself irreproachably, and each time he had spoken well to her. Something provocative about her called up witticisms in him. But they were probably dull in her ears . . . . drab and inept. His manner was easy only in his own eyes. She had probably read grotesque stiffnesses into it. But why had she laughed?

He took one hand from his pocket and swung it to a more determined pace. He tightened his lips before more firmly set teeth. What did her laughter matter? It could not color his mood so sombrely. Nothing of her weighed so heavily with him as to balance him to such distractions. It was a mere exuberance that dictated the kiss tonight. Of herself she never moved him. He amended it, she was even distasteful to him. Yet her laughter jarred echoes in his ears, and not even the vision of bright lighted show windows where polished shoes were illuminated before smooth yellow draperies closed from his vision the memory of her lips twisted in derisive amusement. The feeling was a blackness such as cuts remorselessly an emptiness before sensitive eyes. And the blackness was throbbing.

He walked into the glare that emerged from the hood of a subway kiosk and out again. Considerations pressed too heavily. He would walk to the next station to weigh rational judgments and color moods more lightly. Sorrow should disappear if one reasoned its causes away or at least cease to despair if other hopes were lighted.



But the quietness of the street was oppressive, and darkness closed in upon solitary lights. Distracting noises and brilliant flarings were needed to start him from his mood. Instead the night was heavy and the air senseless. Occasional street lamps marked dismal circles in the crumby night, and vague forms accompanied their shadows through the lighted spaces to disappear in the emptiness of blackness. Dismal grayness hung down the faces of the buildings and what was not sombre was merely ephemeral, like the gray mist that appeared inexplicably from the streets to rise in the light of the street lamps or like the unconvincing figures of people that drifted darkly by.

On a deserted step an ancient woman draped in a black shawl sat motionless behind a dirty reed baby carriage. Silent and motionless. Her face was scarcely visible in the depths of the hood the shawl formed, and distant electric lights maliciously deepened black wrinkles in it. Motionless behind a silent baby carriage.

As his step increased, with the distance, the silence that was spread upon her, his mind built fateful ironies for her. She sat statueque behind a carriage that was empty and in her unmoving silence mocked us. There were no hopes. No stirrings were hers. She did not plan new shoe stores. Nor did she laugh.

This line of thought was inconsequential—and even unkind. He shook himself and attempted to breathe out the agitation that was in his breast. But that was essentially it. Even more than unkind . . . cruel. What was he? And his aspirations? What mattered a shoe store, or his freedom from distasteful subordination, or his eventual ease and dignity? All was lost in inconsequential unmeaning. All things were ephemeral save those that were weighted with futility. And he was the lightest and heaviest of them. His stature was microscopic in all respects. No figure he shaped could carry any allurements, yet he was doomed to move

in uninteresting guises through cosmic landscapes that had no meaning. Physically he was undersized and unattractive. Mentally his attainments were negligible, and even the slight proficiency he had attained was wholly negative. He could ruminate coarsely the thoughts others held to him, but it was not his to think new ones. He stood gaunt and unimaginative. And his universe was unmassed and unblocked. Not even an enticing companionship gave promise of shaping it into interest. He had not even the capacity for that.

All aspects were empty like that blackness that hurt the eyes behind the brightness of the subway kiosk. He breathed with his breath a pain that was heavy on his breast, and each moment gave no higher aspiration to the next than that that moment should mark the end of it . . . and of everything. That at least would soothe.

The buying of the ticket and the descending of the stairs were acts unnoticed in their performance but the memory of which awoke a surprised pondering in him as he stood on the platform. He walked to the platform's end, following the glint of the rails with his eyes. He placed his toes to the edge and looked down to the parallel rails in the pit. In his ear the noise of the approaching train sounded. It moved to a rising insistence and in the re-echoing of its noises increased the excitement in his breast and hastened the fall of his breath while below him the bright point that glistened on each of the rails intensified and beckoned him. . . .

He stepped back.

The train noised its rattling entrance into the station, and he reddened in the unexpected lights of the windows. He walked into the train. He ignored the seats that were empty and stood leaning against the closed door. How many of the people saw his face and read it too accurately? He turned half-aside and as they moved out of the station watched the iron posts slip by, repeating themselves in unending half-lit monotony.

# The Nietzschean Follies

## II.

### An Australian Bacteriologist on the *Diplococcus Americanus*

*By Frank Morton*

NO husband is qualified to judge his colleagues in melancholy until he has grace to stand away from himself and laugh honestly at his own antics. That is the sort of husband I am; I have learned to know my weaknesses and not to be proud of my performance, and so I have won my way back to some endowment of that pride which in the average sort of husband is almost totally extinct.

I suppose that it is the cosmopolitan training does it. If I'm not a cosmopolitan, show me one. It is true that my family on my father's side lived on the same small farm in England for seven hundred years, and that on that side I am thus English to the last cell. But my mother was a Londoner with way-back Hanoverian blood. I was brought up in the Potteries, which is the most cosmopolitan spot in the United Kingdom. I moved to Australia when I was fifteen. I failed ingloriously to become an engineer and a doctor. I went to sea before the mast in a ship whose port of entry was Bath, Maine. I left the ship in Hongkong and saw three hundred men beheaded at Canton as my first newspaper assignment. I dawdled about Japan. I went to Singapore and taught in a mission school conducted by men from Ohio. I got my gruelling in journalism from the soundest journalist in the British Empire. I was sub-editor of the leading newspaper of India at twenty-two. I toured right through

with the Opium Commission and Mrs. Besant (when she was on her first Indian lecture-tour). I saw a little of petty war in the Malay Peninsula. I trailed as a special correspondent as far as Kabul. I have written everything from sermons (for a fee) to theatrical advertisements (for a better fee). And any Australian will tell you that my books and verses are improper. If you think that I know nothing about husbands—well, don't be silly!

The American husband is the queerest specimen of the species. He has less freedom as a man than the Thibetan husband who has only a sixteenth share of his wife. He is more hopelessly pathetic than a snail lost in the Sahara. He is cheaper than skate in the Orkneys. I wouldn't say a harsh word against him for the world; but what I mean is that he is the typical product of a woman-ridden country.

The first thing the cosmopolitan notices about American wives is that they have an ineffable contempt for American husbands; and the first thing he notices about American husbands is that they are scared stiff by American wives. The American wife has looked hard at the American husband for a long time, and so acquired her colossal and stupendously insolent gesture of contempt. This contempt of your wives for your husbands colors all your literature, glares in all your cinemas, vitiates all your verse. It makes possible the whole

host of your drivelling poetasters, from Miss Amy Lowell up. It exudes in a beastly trail of shamefaced sentimentality from all your plays. It makes you the most humorless people in the world. It fills you with chautauquas and Wana-makers.

I never pick up an American magazine without coming across some solemn flapdoodle in which an American woman expresses her dry contempt for the creature Man. I was reading some tosh today in which one of your writers labored to make clear the idiotic point that American husbands were getting back their self-respect now that in many cases they had no longer to support their wives. The cosmopolitan husband never thinks of "supporting" his wife. When they couple-up—well, they couple-up. Whatever income the partnership makes is naturally the joint property of the two. If the wife is worth her salt, the husband knows that he can never earn or steal enough to give her all she deserves; and if she isn't worth her salt he doesn't keep up the unseemly farce of mock-marriage, which is the basest of the prostitutions. The cosmopolitan wife never crawls or whimpers. She knows that whatever the partnership yields of comfort and solace is hers by right. If husband ceased to be comrade she would sicken of the evil association in two days: she would a million times sooner go into a ditch with an honest tinker who played the game.

You are too close up to your problems to see them whole. If you were farther away you would shudder in all your flesh to see how women behave in your cinema-stories. One famous actress in that kind, a slim yard and three-quarters of crass ill-breeding, is never so flagrantly the cocotte as when she tries to act the honest woman. She rolls her eyes. She bristles and struts. She teaches the solemn lesson that the first duty of an American girl is to bleed her admirers. You are not an illiterate people, but you swallow your illiterate cinema-stories because you have no sense of humor and are drunken with

mulish pride in your unceasing quarrel with God. You are so nasty in your ideas of the sex-relations that in your fiction all the virtuous people are episcene. When you have read a book like that you prove the purity of your intentions by going to bed with one of your volumes on so-called sexual ethics, which are simply puerile pornography. And it is all because the American husband isn't a husband anything to speak of.

Mind you, I have no brief for husbands in general, husbands the world over. The whole race of husbands has been held from times immemorial in dry contempt, and the whole race of husbands has deserved no better. But there are exceptions to that rule, and the exceptions are not to be found in America. Here in Australia I know a number of American women who are married to English husbands or Australian husbands (the same thing, broadly), and all of those marriages are happy because the women in them find themselves plunked amazingly into a true relationship of wifehood.

Don't let yourself think that I am a Tory, that I prattle about woman's proper place being the home, or any of that twaddle. I am feminist to the marrow. I would give woman all she demands and as much more as I could invent or compass. But I should say: "Look here, old thing. The earth is yours, and the fullness thereof. I will imperil my soul to get you the sun at noonday, the hushed gold of evening, and the great night of stars. But you must go on being a woman, unless you want to become a cat or a sow. You are not merely our equal; you are in great things immeasurably our superior; but still you can't be exactly *us*, any more than we can become exactly *you*; God saw to that when he determined the differences of our shapes. So long as you are a true woman you will never fall into the hideous mistake of supposing that you can improve man's morals by bullyragging him and destroying his self-respect. Pretend as you will and how you may, you can never do away

with your inborn deep conviction that the man-woman is the nastiest thing in nature, nastier even than the woman-man. Haven't you the sense to see that all the caveman burble you are wallowing in is a symptom of the thing that ails you, the desperate desire to meet a man before you die, the man to whom with all your heart and mind and body you can be woman?"

Then, if she came from New York, she would be rude and tell me unpleasant things about myself; and if she were from Boston she would give me some facts about Yogi . . . Pardon me if I glide discreetly, for the ice about here is very thin.

The American husband is America's worst advertisement. Once or twice good souls on your side have offered me money, more money than I can ever earn on this island, if I would go to New York or one of those outlandish places. I have not gone there. Why have I not gone there? Not because I have any contempt for money. I have adored money ever since I realized the things that can be got with it. I have not gone there simply because I have been afraid to go there. I have been deterred by the grim suspicion that American husbandry, so to speak, may be contagious. The other day in the theatre, an American actor, an excellent entertainer and by nature a very dear chap, was spreading himself and letting us all understand what a great man he was, how stalwart, how independent, how thoroughly captain of his soul. Then from the dusk of a door behind him there came a little mousey woman. She had neither beauty of face nor form that any man should desire her. She had a voice that reminded me of the scraping of a hawk's claws on a tin roof. When she smiled it was deliberate and overpowering teethshow. "Jarge!" she keened; and George jumped seventeen feet.

A little while ago a well-known American actor was here in Australia with his wife. He was a dear chap. Once or twice he and I so daubed Sydney with crimson that the faces of the Plei-

ades got splashed. I used to call on him in his apartment. I would find him shelling peas for his wife, and then, while he and I drank cherry-brandy, which was rabidly bad for us, she would gently confide in me that she was a complete stranger to passion, and he would grin a sickly grin of meek endorsement. Before he had been back in America two months they were divorced. And yet she was one of the sweetest little American women I ever met. She had an original touch of plaintive beauty and charm. Had she married an Englishman she would have been petted and cajoled and—led. Before the honeymoon had waxed to its full she would have been swept on a wave of emotion beyond the stars. Her divorce was really decided on the day of her marriage, because her American husband got things all wrong at the start. Had he got things right she would have been sobbing very happily in his arms within five minutes after they were *enfin souls*.

And yet if I went to America to conduct a mission to husbands I should be prohibited. Even Mr. Gompers (who has again been adventuring among the flowers that bloom in the spring tra-la) would thunder against me. He would say that I have no respect for women—I who have revered women with all my soul since first I made the dear discovery that my blessed mother was a saint of God.

The defects of the American husband are, I grant you, merely the defects of the average husband frightfully exaggerated. I am really turning no new ground when I say that. Did not Lady Mary Wortley Montagu have a prophetic vision of the American husband ever so long ago:

"Tis really terrible for a well-bred, virtuous young woman to be confined to the conversation of the object of their (*sic*) contempt. There is but one thing to be done in that case, which is a method I am sure you have observed practised with success by some ladies I need not name: they associate the husband and the lap-dog, and manage so well that they make exactly the same figure in the family. My lord and Dell tag after madam to all in-

different places, and stay at home together whenever she goes into company where they would be troublesome.

It is useless quite to blame the American wife, who is really chief victim of these circumstances. She is suffering from an acute degree of starvation. To be happy, a wife must have a husband in the fullest sense of the word. If she does not, she gets into mischief. Look where that mischief has already landed you in America. You have Prohibition and all the vicious evils that Prohibition engenders and connotes. If your newspapers have to refer to a criminal's mistress they call her his "sweetheart"—a horrible debasement of a very beautiful word. When a man unhappily married finds solace in the arms of a woman not his wife she is not his mistress, but his "affinity." You are afraid of words that have positive meanings. When the sexual instinct is driven back upon itself it is a busy breeder of evil. Prudishness is a highly specialized effect of the obscene imagination, an insidious immorality productive of incalculable ill. The American husband is a man feminized to the point of prudery; so he takes to eugenics, which surely is most meet.

I would not have you think that I am speaking of America without knowledge. I have known hundreds of Americans. For many years I have greedily read every book and scrap of writing I could discover dealing with America.

Seeing from a distance, one gets details in their due relation and proportion. Here where I sit I could go on writing about America under a gross of heads from now till mankind gets sense and comes into the open. Heads!—Lord! Lord, how easily they come to mind and range themselves alphabetically in one's thinking part! American Academy of Arts and Sciences, American Army, American Art, American Authors, American Backwoodsmen, American Banknotes, American Bar, American Bluff, American Business (how the twins keep together!), American Chamber of Commerce, American Characteristics, American Children, American Churches, American Cities, American Civil War, American Comedy, American Composers, American Constitution, American Copyright (damn!), American Crime (*ad Jove principium*), American Criticism, American Culture, American Democracy (la, la!), American Dramatists, American Education, American English—that's as far as an ordinary lifetime would take any man, and I should have to leave the rest of the alphabet *pour encourager les autres*.

It happens, oddly enough, that I like Americans. I suppose that is why such indignation swells in me when I consider their enslaved and hapless state. Had I not spent many years of my youth in real countries where men are impulsively addicted to alcohol, I might risk America after all.



HAPPINESS: The end of a circle.





# The Letter

*By Miriam Teichner*

## I

**B**ERTA, the maid, brought in the letter with the breakfast tray.

Strangely, that was one of the days on which Sigrid had not thought about the letter's coming. She thought about it almost all the time. Its possible arrival was with her all day, and at night it was a nagging discomfort, like sleeping cold; at other times it was a warm, cozy joy, like the thought in the mind of a woman who is expecting motherhood.

Sometimes, as she walked in the wide Berlin streets, she was possessed of a strong conviction, welling up to her out of the depths of subconsciousness, that the letter had come, that it would be waiting for her. She saw just how it would look, a large white square on the dull red baize cover of the table in her little bedroom. On these days she fished the ring of heavy German keys from her handbag half a block before she reached the house and, opening the outside doors with a clattering hurry, would rush upstairs.

The apartment door gave a thick, wooden grunt as you opened it. Always, the grunt was associated with that thought of a letter; she seemed never to be aware of the grunt so acutely as on the days when she had confounded her own longing with the psychic certainty of her unconscious mind. Sometimes the grunt said yes, and sometimes no, but it always meant no, for the letter was never there. The dull red cloth, with strips of tarnished gold braid criss-crossing at the corners, was just as she had

left it—a pair of soiled white suede gloves, a last night's opera program, a torn paper of Swiss chocolate—no letter. Not that she had really expected it, she told herself.

Today, somehow, she had awakened to a sense of peace, with no thought of the letter. It was a rainy day, and she was always more at peace when the weather was bad. It was the cool, blue-and-gold splendor of October that possessed her with a passion of loneliness; she needed no one to help her bear dullness and ugliness. But beauty was very hard to bear alone.

So, on this dull morning, with a pleasant drip in her ears, and the cool, moist smell of sodden yellow elm leaves in her nostrils, she went to her workroom. She was a writer, and she had two stories to do which interested her, and as she entered the room she gave a quick, satisfied look around at her broad desk with the piled atlases and dictionaries and reference books; at the sheaf of newspapers—every day she read vigorously through them all, from extreme left to extreme right—at her covered typewriter which she loved for its dynamic pregnancy of satisfying speed—speed that kept up with her thoughts.

It would be a good and busy morning. And in the afternoon she was invited to a tea; she would not have to be lonely for many hours today.

She sat down to the table with her papers.

Then Berta came with pears and rolls and coffee.

And there was the letter.

She took it in her hands, still

absently. And then, at sight of the small, rather effeminate writing, her heart surged up in her breast like a wave that would drown her; there was a singing in her ears, and her throat and mouth were dry, as though they had been swabbed with blotting paper.

Berta showed a disposition to stay and talk. She had a baby, and Sigrid had helped her with money. Now, the baby was sick; it had rickets, and Berta was frightened and wanted sympathy. But Sigrid was dumb; she just sat and looked at Berta, and the girl was abashed, and withdrew.

There was the letter.

She had waited for it for eight months. She had, of course, tried to cheat herself into thinking that she did not expect a letter. But she had always expected one. Once, even, she had half dreamed, half sensed, the possibility of a cable. In it, he would ask her to marry him; which, of course, was silly.

But now—here was the letter.

## II

SHE did not open it. She sat holding it in those long, white hands of hers—the left with an emerald ring—and examined minutely every detail of that small, neat and rather precious writing. She touched with the tip of her tongue a corner of the blue five-cent stamp which had become loosened, and painstakingly pasted it flat again. She turned the letter over and looked at the flap; there was no return address. The postmark was blurred; she could not read it. Then she propped the letter against the coffee pot, and cupped her chin in her hand and sat and stared at it.

There it was; after eight months. And now she was afraid to open it.

She wished that it had come unsolicited. But however she tried to cheat herself, she had to admit that, in reality, she had asked for it—had, tacitly, begged for it. She had hoped for a letter every day since she had

landed, but in the six weeks since she had written to him, every hour had been filled with expectation and with reckoning. After the first ten days, "Maybe he has it today," she would say. And then: "Maybe he is answering today."

She tried to figure back the difference in time between Berlin and New York, and to fancy what he was doing. Sometimes, when she awoke rather late in the morning, and imagined him six hours away in sleep, she tried, deliberately, to influence his thought, to plunge her mind into his quiescent consciousness. And for these last two weeks, every moment had been an agony of expectation and disappointment.

She had never meant to write to him, of course. When she had left him in March to take this assignment in Germany, she had intended never to let him hear from her again. The assignment had come like the answer to prayer. She had longed to get away; she had wanted to leave New York and every association that reminded her of him. She had thought that she could save herself from suffering. There would be the ocean voyage, and then a new country, new contacts, new things to see and learn, hard and satisfying work.

It had all happened as she had planned—all except her expected freedom, in work and new interests, from suffering. She had suffered terribly. There was something almost obscene to her in the way she had suffered—as all uncontrolled emotion is obscene to those habitually poised.

She had plunged into a sea of pain, and had struggled, panic-stricken, alone, terrified, with nothing in life but the bitter waters of that sea, closing in again and again over her head, surging in her ears, smarting in her panting lungs. Occasionally she had been able to battle back, for a moment, into the sweet clean air of poise and sanity, to realize that there was still a world of calm and quiet

and peace; then she would sink again, and struggle with pain as the drowning struggle with vast waters.

Work had helped, but she was a woman traveling alone in a strange country, and there were long hours to be lived alone: meals to be eaten alone, music to be heard alone, beauty to be endured alone.

She had been for two weeks in spring on the Rhine and during that time the moon had grown from a slim young crescent to the full, hanging, more pearl than gold, in a clear, bright sky. And the Rhine-walk in Coblenz had been murmurous with the voices of lovers. And the square pile of Ehrenbreitstein had loomed thunderously black against that moon-drenched sky. And the lights on the shore had been reflected in the dark water like whirling golden spindles.

Misty with spring rains, the banks of the Rhine had faded into vague folds of half-guessed hills, veiled in pale moonlight. She had started to walk across the pontoon bridge, just to enjoy the shimmering beauty of the night, and the lipping chat of the water. Then, suddenly, the sense of her loneliness had flooded over her again, and she did not cross the bridge. She went back to her cold little hotel room, with its inevitable wooden bed and its inevitable bowl and pitcher; she had drawn the heavy dusty curtains with a vicious tug at the tasseled cord, and had gone to bed, so that she would not have to see the moon.

All of the eight months had been like that. She had thought that she would cheat pain by throwing herself into a very orgy of work, but she had found how silly that thought was. You couldn't cheat pain. Sometimes, inevitably, you were too tired or too stupid to work, and then there was pain, patient, inexorable, waiting to take its legitimate place which work had, for a little, futile hour, usurped. Sometimes, even while you worked, pain came. She had interviewed big

men blinking tears out of her eyes, her attention wavering between what they said and the sudden stabbing remembrance of a kiss or an embrace.

In her loneliness she grew to hate women whom she saw with tender and attentive men. She hated the fond German couples walking hand-in-hand. She hated married women with their smug gold rings; when she sat alone at her hotel meals and saw them with their husbands, she always imagined that they must be very happy, having companionship and love, and she envied them with a futile rage of bitterness.

So she had traveled and worked through Germany. They wrote her from home that her work was good, but that seemed to be something that was quite outside of her real life, something that did not concern her at all. Someone else, it seemed to her, was doing her work; the real Sigrid sat back in the dim shadows and kept tryst with pain.

If she had been different, she might have written to him soon after landing, might have begged. But she wasn't that kind of woman. When it ended she had determined that it would be ended for always. She kept to that determination from March until October. Then, on October first—she had for long been dreading the month—she walked to her desk like an automatic doll, and took stationery and wrote:

"I do not know where you are now, nor with whom, but, because it is October, I am sending you happiness-wishes."

Five minutes before she wrote it, she would have sworn that she would never write to him, that she had not the remotest intention of writing to him. She would have said that she did not even know where to reach him, because he was a writer too and his work took him everywhere. Yet—there was the letter written as though by an invisible hand, and, sealing it, she remembered suddenly the address of his father in a little college town—

an address at which mail would always reach him. So the letter was sealed and stamped and Berta had taken it away.

And now—there was an answer.

"Because it is October," she had written. It was his birthday month, and he might consider her words as birthday good wishes if he were in a mood to look no deeper than that. They might even pass for that with—his wife, if it so happened that, by now, he had a wife, and one who was curious about his foreign mail. Yes, they might pass for birthday wishes, those lines; but underneath the writing of them lay a flicker of hope that she thought had died—a hope that he still cared and that, recalled to a more vivid remembrance of last October by those words, he might write and tell her.

She was not, she told her pride, sacrificing anything in writing this note. She had sworn to herself never to let him know where she was in Germany, but this was not letting him know. She had, to be sure, written her return address on the envelope, but if she didn't do that, how was she to know whether or not he had received the letter? That wasn't telling him. It was just taking sensible precautions against losing a letter. Didn't she always put a return address on every letter? Of course she did.

Moreover, she assured her pride, the thing was neatly done. There was in the note no implication that she wanted or expected a reply. It was simply the courteous birthday wish of one friend to another. It would be no breach of etiquette not to answer it, and indeed, she told her pride, she expected no reply. Yes, but her pride could have told her that those lines which she had written, sitting like a pale mechanical doll at her desk, were carefully planned, deep down in her subconsciousness, to be more than birthday wishes. They were planned to remind him of last October.

October! Even before she had known him, it had been her own, best-loved month—a month of blue-and-gold perfection, a gypsy month when the out-of-doors called to her even more loudly and sweetly than it called in the spring, a month when, always, she longed to turn her back on cities, and tramp long roads, with blue water dancing on one hand, and golden leaves on the other, and, in the air, that splendid smell of autumn, a smell that made her want to breathe deep, so that its acrid pungence tingled in her nostrils, a smell that made her want to throw open her arms and laugh aloud with the joy of just being alive in October.

There had been one afternoon when he had come to her rooms in New York to fetch her, and they had taken the ferry to Staten Island and walked. There were glorious wood-walks on Staten Island, if you knew where to find them, and he knew. The leaves were yellow and brown and crimson against an unflawed sky, and the air was gold with showers of dancing leaves, and the water was that deep October blue—yes, she was sure it was a blue quite unlike its summer or its winter blue—and they had walked through the woods, glimpsing those indigo waters through the bright trees, and shuffling their feet in the friendly leaves. Then they sat down under a great elm—the weather was still mild, and the grass was sun-warmed and dry—and after a few minutes of tense, speaking silence, he had flung a quick arm about her, and had drawn her back so that she lay in his arms, and kissed her and kissed her.

That had been the beginning. It lasted all of that sapphire-and-gold October, and almost through the winter. Then, gradually, they were together less often, and she had learned the cause—a Russian dancer. Sigrid had not blamed or reproached him: if you understood, you never reproached people for loving or not loving. Men had scolded and bullied her,

demanding to know "why not" when she could not love them, and that was stupid.

So when Sigrid had seen him with the dancer, she had understood. One couldn't wonder at his loving the Russian; she was like a flame held poised by some magic power. And she was like a panther, and like a young, joyous tree, and like a serpent and like a gay and innocent child.

When Sigrid compared her own sturdy ruddiness to that sleek, slim beauty, she was very humble and she did not question nor rage. She understood. The exotic had always appealed to him. You could see that, even in the things he ate; when they were together in restaurants, it was always Sigrid who had ordered the steak and baked potatoes; he had always had rich things, with oily dressings and heaped cream. He liked rich and suave and exotic things—orchid things. And the Russian was like an orchid.

He had tried not to let Sigrid know. That was the worst. He had kept coming, and taking her places, though less often, and pretending to care. But their crowd was small—crowds are, in New York—and she could not help knowing. When she told him, though, he was strange. He admitted that he loved the Russian, and wanted to marry her. But he wanted Sigrid too. She couldn't make him see that that wouldn't do.

He was selfish, an egoist, with a power of cold hardness in the midst of passion, that was like black rock in the midst of flame. If he could love two women, he queried—and it was beyond his belief that one woman could satisfy any man—what was that to either of them? She despised him for that, but it didn't keep her from loving him. It was like that when you really loved. This copy-book idea of loving only where you respect was all rot. She couldn't respect him. He was a cad and a liar and the most selfish person in the world. But she loved him, and

she knew in her heart that she would have crawled to him on bleeding knees, just for the joy of being lifted in his arms, and feeling his lips on hers.

So she went away.

And now—here was his letter.

### III

WHEN Berta came to take away the breakfast tray, Sigrid was still staring at the letter, propped upright before her. The girl exclaimed over the untouched breakfast, and said that she would reheat the coffee. But Sigrid replied that she wanted nothing. The breakfast went away, and Sigrid went to her desk.

She sat there, and looked at the letter, and felt of the paper. It was good paper. She sniffed to see whether an odor of his cigarettes had clung but there was no odor. Then she propped the letter against her inkwell, and sat and stared again.

She wished that the letter had not come. If she had never heard from him, she could have imagined that he had quarreled with the Russian. Now, she would have to know the truth. Suppose he had actually married her? Suppose they had gone on a honeymoon, this very month—a honeymoon in the October woods. She thought of him so often as the perfect woodsman he was; she pictured him bending over a camp fire, his sleeves rolled high, his collar off and his shirt folded down into a deep V, the fire casting vivid stains of crimson light and purple shadow on his lean dark face. Suppose the letter told that they were together—he and the Russian girl—in the woods this October. She simply couldn't stand that, you know. . . .

It was ten o'clock; and eleven, and twelve, and one. She sat with her chin propped on her hands, and looked at the letter, and wished that she could divine its contents, without performing the titanic effort of will necessary to slit the envelope, and unfold the page, and—see what was written there. Sometimes, the fancy that it would be



words of love for her, an entreaty for her to give up Germany and come home, danced joyously into her mind, but she smiled scornfully at that. If he had wanted her, he would have written months ago; they had many friends in common, and it would have been easy for him to learn her address. The letter was—it must be news of his marriage to that twining thing of flame and flesh, to that sinuous, laughing, tragic child, the Russian dancer.

Sigrid took a little pocket mirror from one of the desk drawers, and looked at herself. Almost thirty she was; tawny hair, nice, frank, northern eyes, nose and mouth commonplace; complexion, healthy and out-of-doors. The Russian girl was like white velvet with a vivid carnelian flower of a mouth, and a great mass of short black hair. She was mystery and passion, in the flesh. In her mirror, Sigrid found nothing of mystery, nothing of romance, just a nice girl, not very young. It wasn't enough—no, not even if you had brains, and were sent abroad by newspapers to write about Germany.

She put away the little mirror, and took the letter, and fingered it, and laid it flat before her. Then she folded her hands back of her head, and stared out at the dripping streets and the gray sky.

At half past one she went to the little restaurant at the corner of Uhland strasse and Kurfurstendamm, for her lunch. She bought a newspaper of the old man who always stood at the door, and croaked "B. Z.," like a hoarse and misanthropic fowl; she discovered that she was hungry and, ordering a good meal, she ate it automatically.

The letter had come along in her handbag, and now it lay on the table. She did not read her newspaper and she did not read the letter. She was trying to forge courage in the glowing smithy of her desire but she could as easily have sorcered iron from air. It was stupid to love a man like that, she raged at herself—stupid, degrading, terrible. But that was the way she did love him.

The unopened letter was replaced in her handbag and traveled back to the workroom.

This time she sat determinedly to her machine. There was work to do—a certain number of stories a week for which the syndicate paid, and to which it had a right. But she could not work. Suddenly, after months of holding her will firm and taut, it had gone limp. She had lost control; the slack and sickened will no longer obeyed her.

She had resolved to keep the letter out of sight in the black handbag, but the letter came out of the bag, and was propped, this time, against a tall brass candle stick with a dull green candle. She could see it out of the tail of her eye, as she sat at her machine, her long fingers on the keys, like the fingers of a pianist, waiting for power.

She had to turn to look at the letter. Sometimes, it seemed as though her desire would pull the words out through the paper, and limn them on the white surface of the envelope, or that they must become vocal and speak themselves. She wanted to know—but she was afraid; she could not open the letter. She could not work. She wished that her telephone would ring. It lay at her elbow, and its curving horn, at one end of the horizontal bar, seemed to blare silence at her. If it had spoken the words of the letter to her, it would have seemed right and natural.

She fingered her typewriter keys, and wrote her name in the upper left hand corner of the paper, as she always wrote it, but more she could not write. She bent her head over the machine, and spelled idly the foolish words the letters made "Q-W-E-R-T," and then, it being a German machine, "Z" instead of "Y." Once she had discovered in a moment of idleness that you could make a picture of a little cat on a typewriter. You made a small "o" and, directly above it, pushing the carriage back, you put quotation marks for the ears. On a German machine, though, you didn't need to use the quotation marks; you used the umlaut "ö" with the two little dots already made. Then,

directly below, you put a comma, for the tail, and there was the tiny cat. Now she made a whole row of little cats. Then she cleaned the keys with great care, using a little brush, and picking out with a pin the tiny purple cakes of clotted dust and ink. This seemed very important.

She had forgotten the tea to which she had been asked. The coppery October twilight came, and she was there at her desk again, her head bent over the unopened letter, a pale ghost of a letter, glimmering in the half light.

The twilight grew to purple and to gray and to dull shadowy black.

Berta knocked, flashed on a dazzle of light, and brought the supper tray—tea, and dark bread, spread with an ingenious variety of sausages and cold meats and cheese and small salty fish. She exclaimed at Fräulein's sitting so, in the cold damp dark. She spread a white cloth, and began to talk about her baby. Sometimes she called the baby "der Junge" and sometimes, with equal tenderness, "das Tierchen."

Sigrid answered now. It was a relief to talk. She promised to go Sunday to the hospital with Berta. She liked to think of Sunday.

"By then," she told herself, "I shall know, and I shall still be alive. Everything will be as it is now, only—I shall know."

She kept Berta there while she ate her bread and drank her tea. Berta had 150 marks wages a month—slightly more than a third of what Sigrid had just paid for a pair of pumps—and, when the baby was well, she paid 30 marks a week for it in a nursing home. But now the baby had rickets—Berta thought that the woman in the home had given part of its food to her own baby—and the hospital to which it had been taken asked 20 marks a day.

It was an unsolvable problem in finance for Berta, but Sigrid said that

she would pay for the baby's month in the hospital. It would mean only 600 marks, and it might save the baby's life. It did not seem of great importance to Sigrid that lives should be saved, but Berta seemed to love the baby, and it was good to have something little and sweet like that to love—something of your own. The baby's father wanted to marry Berta, but he was out of work, and marrying was so expensive.

It pleased Sigrid to listen to Berta. It made her almost forget the letter; it made her less afraid.

It was after nine o'clock when Berta took the supper things away. Sigrid took a book—it was necessary that she keep up her German reading and this was the third volume of Bismarck's memoirs—and sat with it before her until almost eleven. The letter was between the pages of the book, and occasionally Sigrid turned back and looked at it, as though it might have changed.

A little after eleven, she went into her bedroom; she left the letter in the book, lying on her desk.

"Tomorrow morning," she said, "When the clock strikes nine, I will read the letter."

She undressed, and went to bed.

Very late, she crept, with her long hair hanging about her, and her bare feet making no sound, into her workroom, and groped for the book, and found the letter and took it back to the other room, and to bed with her. She held it to her heart and her lips, and then cuddled it under her pillow.

After that for a time, she lay very still. Then, suddenly she sprang out of bed and as she rose she was tearing the letter into tiny bits. She struck a match and heaping the fragments into a saucer, she made a little pyre and burned them.

Then she went back to bed. But she did not sleep.



# The March of the Centuries

By William Seagle

THERE dwelt, in ancient Alexandria, a man who one morning, as he strolled by the gates of the palace, threw a stone into the air and, when it fell to earth, cried:

"Lo! when a thing is cast into the air, it will fall to earth again."

"What a bore," the people said.

Many centuries later, another man threw a stone into the air and published the following in the *Journal for Physical Research*:

"When a thing is cast into the air, the force of gravity will pull it down."

"He is a scientist," the people said.



## A Song of Dreams Come True

By Muna Lee

MY love was born on a tropic coast,  
And I, far from the sea—  
But the laughing eyes of my lover  
Know the dreams that came to me  
When I longed for wide blue waters  
And great winds flung out free;

And the magic words of my lover  
Are the songs that I tried to sing  
When my heart grew sick for green hill-tops  
In the midst of the dusty spring  
That brought no rain to the wheat-stalks,  
Nor brought me anything.

He is tall as a palm, is my lover;  
As a flame-tree, vivid is he;  
Dusk and fire is his utterance,  
And around and over me  
Are the warm soft wings of the Trade winds  
That blow from the tropic sea.



# The Fifth Decade

*By Carl Dreher*

I

MRS. FARNHAM was thirty-nine. She stood gazing down at the intricate patterns of foam curling back from the prow of the ship as it pushed the water to either side. Her husband was amidships in the smoking-room, watching the poker players, or perhaps playing himself. He was a patent lawyer, and he said that poker reminded him of his business, with the drudgery left out. He could never get away from patents entirely, not even at sea.

Mrs. Farnham's thirty-ninth year was near its end; the last few grains were trickling through the neck of the glass. She would be forty tomorrow. Well, forty wasn't old—but, of course, in a woman, it wasn't young, either. Too old for follies; too young for resignation! It would pass like everything else; her youth, the tingling freshness of unaccustomed sensations, the journey from which they were returning, the ever-changing spume at the prow of the ship.

They were coming up from Rio. Tomorrow, on her birthday, they would be home. The junior wireless operator, who had been a special friend of Mrs. Farnham all the way north, had told her not long before that they were near Five Fathom Lightship off the Jersey coast, which would put Atlantic City on the port bow. It was chilly. A red haze hung on the horizon where the sun was setting. Mrs. Farnham, watching the golden orange ball dip into the sea,

saw it become a semicircle; then only a slit remained; then all was gone. She walked back to the companion-way and, mounting to the upper deck, passed the smoking-room. Her husband, a pot-bellied man with a smooth, round, phlegmatic face, was sitting at one of the tables. Some outposts of gray hair clustered about his ears; the rest of his head was bald. He wore well-cut, conservative clothes and a wing collar. It was difficult to imagine Mr. Farnham without this wing collar. It fitted in with his dignified call to the clerk: "Jones, get me that reference," with phrases like "Infringement of Claims 1, 2, 3, 6, 14, and 18 of Letters Patent, No. 10,643,228"; "In Equity"; "Amicus Curiae," and other fragments from the sad, imposing structure of the law.

As Mrs. Farnham looked in, her husband, glowering at his cards, struck his knuckles sharply on the table. The player on his left pushed forward some chips. Mr. Farnham did not see his wife. She walked aft, stared moodily at the wake of the ship, walked forward again on the port side, and stopped at the door of the wireless cabin, as often before. The junior operator sat with the telephones on his ears, occasionally turning a knob on the receiving set in front of him. Mrs. Farnham glanced at the ebonite panels, the polished brasswork, the six conspicuous copper-coated jars of the transmitter—familiar, meaningless objects. It was wonderful, no doubt, but she did not understand any of it. Not only the wireless apparatus, but the whole

ship itself was a mystery to her. The great swinging beams and pistons in the engine room, watched over by oilers, turning the massive shaft on which the screw was mounted, driving the ship north, ceaselessly evolving the queer designs of foam—what was the meaning of it all? What was the use of thinking about it?

Nixon, the junior operator, turned around and smiled at Mrs. Farnham. He had blond hair and a pleasant, youthful face, not at all thoughtful or distinguished in expression, but agreeable enough. His dark blue uniform, with its stiff high collar, made him appear somewhat older than he was. He could not invite her in, but they talked over the threshold. She liked the gesture with which he tilted his telephone back on his head, so that his right ear, turned toward her, was uncovered, while he listened to the signals with the other.

"Aren't you afraid you'll miss something, talking to me like this?" asked Mrs. Farnham.

"No fear of that. If anyone calls me, or a distress signal comes in, I can recognize it even if I'm asleep. The rest of the traffic don't concern me. I've got to log it every quarter hour, but I can fake that up easy enough if I want to."

Nixon was a happy-go-lucky, altogether likable fellow. He had been a second-class petty officer in the Navy during the war, and told stories of how he and his shipmates stood at the door of a cabaret in Constantinople, barring all Limies from entrance, and beating those who persisted in trying to enter. In Lisbon they fought with Spaniards and Portuguese—Spicks; and in Cherbourg with Frogs. The perfidious Spicks had resorted to the use of sharply pointed brass knuckles, shots had been fired, and the affair ended with the executive officer of the flotilla calling out the marines. When the sailors were not encountering foreigners—as Nixon called all Euro-

peans, even on their own soil—ship fought with ship, or the deck force with the firemen, or the bluejackets with the marines, or individuals were having it out in the forecastle. Nixon related these stories casually, without shame or affectation. In answer to Mrs. Farnham's question he replied:

"Oh, fighting was in the air then; you fought anybody at all." When anyone spoke of battling for democracy, for ideals, he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Sure, I suppose so. We went where we was sent," and that ended the matter for him. He never became heroic about it.

Nixon used picturesque expressions such as Mrs. Farnham never heard at home. He called the colored waiter "the dinge"; soup was "bilgewater", and a mast was a "stick." And the places to which he had been! He spoke of them in the most matter-of-fact way: in Naples one ate a dish with red sauce; the principal street of Savannah, Ga., was named Bull, which he thought very funny; in Tampico, where he had put in on oil tankers, one could not buy an ice cream soda, but there were gunfights on the docks every night.

It must be wonderful, exclaimed Mrs. Farnham, to have traveled so much. Nixon laughed. Cities were very much alike, he thought, and New York had them all skinned a mile.

## II

MRS. FARNHAM had been married fifteen years. On their honeymoon she and Farnham had gone to Bermuda. How different things had been then! Her husband, eight years the elder, had seemed to her the most masterful, imposing man on the ship; his manner with the stewards, his dignified bearing on all occasions, had impressed her beyond measure. She could hardly believe that she was really his wife. At that time he had a presentable figure and wore his

hair fairly long in the back, like an artist. She had never loved him: somehow one could not get to love a man by trying. She had married him because it seemed the reasonable thing to do. As the years passed she lost some of her respect for him; when one knew him well he was not at all formidable. He began, indeed, to get on her nerves. When she heard him at the door in the evening there was a little involuntary shrinking. When he kissed her she had all she could do to hide her distaste.

And yet, judged by the usual standards, their marriage had not turned out badly. Outwardly their relations were normal. Farnham earned a decent income, eight or ten thousand dollars a year. He was forty-eight, and it was only a matter of a few years when he would be taken into the law firm of Pitters, Thompson, and Elton, with which he was connected. He had done as well as could be expected. Only, he was so literal, so unimaginative, so completely lacking in variety. Perhaps his work had helped to make him so. There was nothing inspirational about it. Inventors were useful to industrial corporations, and required protection somewhat as a paymaster received the escort of an armed guard. The lawyer's part did not involve the creation of ideas, but their transmutation into patent claims. There was nothing poetic about it—but it was bringing the Farnham's up from Rio in the first cabin.

Mrs. Farnham was a small, well-formed woman with curly black hair and alert gray eyes. Her features were regular and she was still pretty. Since her marriage she had taken on weight at the rate of about a pound a year, until now she scaled one hundred and thirty-seven pounds in ordinary clothing. Her figure did not betray her forty years. She had plump arms; breasts small, firm, and beautifully rounded; moderately broad hips and shoulders; well-shaped ankles. There were no chil-

dren. Mrs. Farnham had not cared to risk her figure, of which she had always been very vain. Of late years, since the remnants of sympathetic contact between her husband and herself had disappeared, she had regretted the absence of children. Some women she knew, who did not love their husbands, had children to care for; but she had no one. One or two, she told herself now, would not have been a bad thing, but of course that was all over now, and might as well be put out of mind.

The Farnhams lived in a suburb on Long Island, in a house set back from a pleasant street lined by elm trees. There was a servant and an automobile, but no chauffeur. Mr. Farnham drove himself. He was not a member of the Country Club, because he did not play golf, and as his law practice was in a special field, membership would hardly have been of advantage to him in a business way. His wife felt that on social grounds it was incumbent on him to belong and his reluctance was the cause of one of a number of chronic grudges which she cherished against him. She herself belonged to several women's clubs, and their affairs, with worry over the servant problem, questions of dress, frequent attendance at Broadway matinées, and a certain amount of reading, made up her life, and saved her from being seriously bored during the day, while her husband was at his office. In the evening he came home tired, but as often as not carrying briefs and scientific literature, which, after dinner, he would scan eagerly for a reference against some inventor whose claim to originality it was necessary to demolish. Mrs. Farnham sat on the other side of the table, usually reading a novel. Her taste in fiction was above the average. As she sat opposite her silent husband she was, at different times, the Madame Odintzoff of whom Bazaroff dreamed, Emma Bovary with the wild and sombre eyes, or the pagan de Maupin. When she



looked up it was Ambrose Farnham who sat before her engrossed in some incomprehensible litigation.

On a Sunday afternoon he indulged himself in his only concession to sentiment,—a phonograph, with an attachment for automatically replaying records, and an electric winding device. It required no other attention than an occasional pressure on the button of the winder mechanism. Mr. Farnham would lie in an armchair, his head lolling back close to the resonance box of the machine, and often he would play a selection like "Caro Nome" four or five times, staring sadly up at the ceiling.

It may be conjectured that at such periods he was the possessor of vague romantic emotions which had no other part in his life. However this was, he masked his yearnings with a sufficiently earthly indulgence, for while listening to the music he chewed tobacco, spitting the juice at short intervals into a receptacle placed near his chair. During the week, of course, he smoked cigars. This Sunday afternoon procedure,—the arias, the tobacco, and the ready spittoon, became a ritual with him; he disliked visitors on the Sabbath because they interfered with this pleasure. Mrs. Farnham declared it disgusting, and always secluded herself while it lasted in another quarter of the house. At the close of the séance Farnham would empty and clean the cuspidor himself, and put it away in his room. This procedure he had followed, almost without a break, for eight years.

### III

MRS. FARNHAM, exchanging badinage with the wireless operator, observed things which she vaguely felt she should not have noticed. When he laughed a dimple showed on either side of his mouth, not such round dimples as a woman has, but deep and as symmetrical. Mrs. Farnham would have liked to touch them with

the tip of her little finger. She would have liked to run her hand through his hair, which never seemed to stay combed. The flesh of his neck was firm, not covered with loose skin and folds of fat. He did not look as if he would ever have a pot-belly.

"Tomorrow we'll be back in the old town," Nixon remarked, "and you, I suppose, return to your happy home, eh?"

"I don't think I shall like my happy home so much, after traveling two months. I'd like to keep on moving; all the wanderlust isn't out of my system yet. And you? Are you going down again?"

"I suppose so. She's a pretty good ship, and the old man's not as bad as some of the skippers I've sailed under. As long as I can't get a tub of my own, where I won't have the senior operator riding me all the time, guess I'll stick to this one. Then I like the girls in Rio; that's another reason for staying on this route."

"Don't you like the girls everywhere?" asked Mrs. Farnham, laughing.

"Well, now, I'll tell you," the junior operator ventured, growing confidential. "You'd be surprised if I told you all I know about lonely ladies"—Nixon never said *women* but always *ladies*—"who take ocean trips. Some are married, some not. I've comforted quite a parcel of them myself." He smiled, tilting his chair back against the panel of the transmitting set. "It's different than on land, somehow; things don't seem to count so much out here."

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Farnham, thoughtfully. "I suppose afterward it's like the rest of the trip, all over and done with. It's gone; you just forget it."

"While it lasts, it's naughty, but it's nice, as we used to say in the liberty parties going ashore. It's that kind of world. We only live once." Nixon was not sure how far he could go. Usually his technique

in amatory discourse was much less restrained; but with a saloon passenger one had to be careful until one knew which way the wind blew. It wasn't like talking to some greasy cotton-mill girl in Rio or Pernambuco. "Anyway," he said to himself, "I don't know if I want to start anything with her. She's no spring chicken. Still, she's not a bad-looker."

The conversation continued personal. He was twenty-six years old, he told her. She challenged him to guess her age. He gazed at her in profile and full face, and took the opportunity to let his eyes travel over her figure; then he estimated thirty-three. She complimented him on his accuracy, told him she was thirty-five, and though she had a suspicion that he had knowingly underestimated, she could not help blushing with pleasure.

"Your husband's a deal older than you, isn't he?" asked Nixon.

"Yes, quite a few years." He had never been young, she was tempted to add. She spoke of something else, but before long they were talking once more about each other. Nixon declared that he favored black-haired ladies. To blondes he was indifferent. Blondes were cold and stupid. He said this with such assurance that one would have thought that he had been in the arms of practically all living light-haired women. And he made it plain that his taste was for tangible charms. Thin, spiritual girls might attract college professors, but they were not built to the specifications of a man who crossed the equator a dozen times a year. Mrs. Farnham, he said, reminded him of an actress who had been a "great little pal" of his. It was to be inferred that under favorable circumstances Nixon might not be indifferent to such a woman as Mrs. Farnham herself.

"Come on in," he invited her. "The old man's up in the wheelhouse now. Anyway, he wouldn't say anything.

It's just a fool regulation. You can say you're filing a radio."

He put the telephone on her head and let her listen to the signals.

"Now there's Norfolk," he explained, "the high-pitched one. The lower note, a little fainter—d'you hear it?—that's Hatteras. Wait a minute—here's Miami, Florida. He comes in pretty strong now that it's getting dark. About twelve hundred miles, that."

Mrs. Farnham listened, and made the usual remarks, "Isn't that wonderful?" and "How can you tell them apart?" Nixon explained as well as he could.

"You look swell with the phones on," he told her. "Pity you can't be a wireless operatress. I'd a darn sight rather you for my senior than that old crab Crosby."

She looked at herself in the mirror in her handbag, and agreed that the effect was piquant.

"I wouldn't mind sailing with you, if I were a wireless operator," she remarked, laughing; "but I'd require a separate office."

"Why?" inquired Nixon with a comical pretense of innocence. "We'd alternate on duty, you know. I get off at midnight, for instance, but then you'd go on watch, so you'd be alone."

"Still, I don't think I should feel safe with you," countered Mrs. Farnham, laughing mischievously, and leaning forward a little, her arms on the table.

"You certainly wouldn't be safe if you looked at me like that," agreed Nixon, grimly. He came nearer, staring at her boldly. She avoided his eyes and assumed a dignified manner.

"Help me take off these things." Her hair was caught in the headband. He let his hand rest against her cheek while he untangled it slowly. A few strands came off with the telephones. He made a loop of them and hung it on one of the knobs of the receiving apparatus.

"To remember you by," he told Mrs. Farnham.

It was foolish and juvenile, she realized, but she liked it. He was really a darling boy. What a pity that after tomorrow she could not see him again! She sighed. It was almost time for dinner, and she turned to go. While she was standing at the door exchanging a few parting sallies, Mr. Farnham came out of the smoking-room on the port side, and approached the wireless cabin. He glanced at her expressionlessly.

"Hello, dear," cooed his wife. "Were you playing cards?"

"I was," grunted Mr. Farnham. Then, turning to Nixon, who had seated himself once more at the table, he said shortly,

"I wish to send a message to New York."

"Yes, sir." The operator handed him a blank, and Farnham wrote on it.

"This will get to New York early this evening, won't it?" he inquired. "What are the charges?"

"That's twelve words at thirteen cents a word—one fifty-six. . . . All right, sir, I'll get that off right away."

He started the generator and began calling Cape May, the nearest coast station, while the lawyer and his wife left the cabin.

"To whom did you send a message, Ambrose?" asked Mrs. Farnham, curiously.

"I merely sent Pitters word that I would be at the office tomorrow. I sent it to his home. If I had thought of it earlier it could have gone to the office. However, he'll have it in an hour or two. Were you sending a message?"

Mr. Farnham looked at his wife unpleasantly for an instant. He had been losing at cards and was in a bad humor.

"No," she answered placidly, "the operator let me listen to signals, that was all. Isn't that a marvelous invention?"

"I wish you wouldn't do that, Nan," exclaimed Farnham testily. "It's not that I'm jealous. It doesn't look well to see you standing at the door there, talking with that fellow, that's all. Why don't you let him attend to his business?"

Mrs. Farnham's cheeks grew hot and red. She waited until they had passed the line of idlers in their steamer-chairs; then she told her husband that she thought she was the best judge of the decorum of her conduct. She added many other things, and did her best to quarrel with him. She had learned to control herself, and usually kept silent when anything irritated her, but on this occasion the accumulated resentment of years struggled for expression. But after his first remark Ambrose showed no desire for fight. He repeated stupidly that he wasn't jealous. It just didn't look well. It wasn't anything serious; he merely thought he would mention it, for her sake.

Mrs. Farnham listened to him in cold silence. As she dressed angry thoughts chased one another through her head. What a ridiculous thing to bring up at the end of the voyage! He might have spared her that. And what right had he to be jealous? He had neglected her for three years, with the exception of a few awkward, inconsequential attentions at long intervals; and yet he coolly assumed the right to monopolize her! True enough, it was rather a blessing that he did neglect her. She did not want him to be fussing with her. She had never loved him to any extent, and since he had grown older, fatter, entirely barren in romantic attractions, he had become distasteful to her. Better nobody than Ambrose. She detested him for his inability to please her, even while resenting the fact that he had given up trying to please her.

It was, she reflected, a hard situation. She was not yet an old woman—Nixon thought she was only thirty-five—but, after all, the truth was that

she was turning forty. It was sad to feel age coming on, and to have lived so little, loved so tepidly. As for the vulgar remark about the wireless operator, she could show Ambrose, if she wanted to! She might give him cause to be jealous! She stopped dressing and looked at herself in the mirror for a long time.

## IV

Mrs. FARNHAM appeared at the last dinner of the voyage in her best evening frock, a black affair cut very low in the bodice and displaying her figure to the best advantage. The captain made a short informal speech in response to a toast from a passenger at his table. The colored waiters stood beaming like children when there is a break in the school routine. Later there was a dance. Mr. Farnham, with a number of the other husbands, did not perform. They stood about the doorway, discussing questions of state, smoking their cigars, and turning their stiff white shirt fronts like searchlights this way and that. Refreshments were served: Punch, little cakes, pastry.

Mrs. Farnham had been dancing continuously. She was thirsty and drank several glasses of the punch, which contained a liberal content of the liquid that heats and exhilarates. Suddenly she thought of something. Securing another tall glass of punch, with some cakes on a plate, she went along the deck to the wireless cabin. Nixon was on watch, his face lighted on one side by the lamp hanging above the table, the other side in deep shadow. The light flickered continually with the motion of the ship. Mrs. Farnham set the cake and punch on Nixon's table. He looked up, a little startled; the telephones had shut out the noise of her approach.

"I've brought you something nice to eat."

"Why—that's awfully kind of you," he said, deeply affected. He ate the cookies, looking at her.

"It's rather warm in here," she murmured, taking off the cape which she had thrown over her shoulders for the walk along the deck. Without meeting Nixon's eyes, she knew that she had produced an effect. She smiled, drew back her shoulders a little, patted her hair with one hand.

"How's the dance?" he asked after a pause.

"Oh, a lot of fat old men. Not three good dancers in the crowd."

"I'll bet you can dance."

"I can still," agreed Mrs. Farnham. "When I can't dance any more, let them bury me."

"I wish I could dance with you," Nixon ventured, staring at her eagerly. "You don't know how stunning you look this evening." The music started again—the ancient "Blue Danube" waltz. Its notes mingled with the swishing of the waves against the vessel's side, the thud-thud-thud of the engines, the sigh of the west wind blowing through the shrouds. When the breeze freshened the mast-stays sang with a low and mournful tone. Mrs. Farnham swayed a little—that was the music, and something else, perhaps? And she heard the thud-thud-thud of the engines, that with every revolution were carrying her home, home with Ambrose, bald and fat. She visualized him in his evening clothes, solemnly talking politics while the music played. God, how she hated to go home!

"Why can't we dance here?" cried Mrs. Farnham.

So they danced in the narrow cabin, bumping against the side of the transmitter, laughing and whispering. And when the music stopped Nixon tightened his arms around Mrs. Farnham, and kissed her. She closed her eyes and whispered faintly, "You mustn't," so he kissed her again. Then her lips met his. The first was a little awkward, but she regained quickly whatever facility she had lost with Ambrose. She was living again, she who had been dead ten years.

She had breathed, dressed in the morning and gone to bed at night, ordered the dinner and eaten it sitting opposite the patent lawyer; but she had not lived. Old instincts leaped up in her like the red flame of a blast furnace in the night. Yet she made Nixon put on his telephones again and take his place at the operating table, while she sat beside him, her arms about his neck, pressing his head against her shoulders.

She reminded him of the ethics of his profession: The wireless operator must keep his watch, come what may. Nixon's head whirled; he heard the signals as in a dream, not knowing what he heard; but in obedience to her wish he kept one of the telephones against his ear. Outside the deck was dimly lighted and quiet; all the passengers were at the dance. He kissed her again, and her response, she realized, was not a sudden madness; it had been smouldering within her for a long, long time. How was it to end? A dreary, unintelligible succession of tomorrows stretched before her; she could abide them, but the present was hers. She made a rendezvous with the operator. At midnight he was to go off duty, ostensibly to sleep as usual. Crosby, the senior, took up the watch at that hour. Nixon would be waiting for her.

"I love you so much," he whispered, and all the other things young men whisper at such times.

Mrs. Farnham, trembling, promised to come.

"I don't care," she murmured, and kissing Nixon for the last time, hurried to her cabin. She powdered her cheeks and made herself presentable before returning, outwardly calm and poised, to the ballroom. Ambrose was yawning.

"Pretty soon I'm going to turn in," he remarked. "Tomorrow—back to work. By the end of the week I'll have a bunch of interference cases on my hands. Well; vacations have

to end, like everything else. I don't mind going back."

Mrs. Farnham had a few more dances. Her cheeks were flushed; she laughed a great deal and hummed to the music.

"A high-spirited woman," remarked one of the ship's officers, watching her.

But while she laughed and chattered she was watching the minutes pass. Two-and-a-half hours. Two-and-a-quarter hours. Midnight; now he must be going off watch. Ambrose suggested retiring. Mrs. Farnham would have preferred staying up, but she felt she could not risk it. Her husband, she knew, suspected nothing, but if he went to sleep alone he might wake up later and look to see if she had come in. It was better to lie down a bit. While undressing she complained of a headache.

"You dance too much," growled Farnham from the upper bunk. He had got into it with a great creaking of springs, and was doubling back the blankets under his feet. At night it became very cold on the ship, now that they were in the northern latitudes. Mrs. Farnham usually helped him with this operation. He puffed and strained. At length he called, "Nan, help me with this."

When the blankets were arranged to his satisfaction he fell back heavily. Mrs. Farnham examining her face in the mirror, pinched her cheeks thoughtfully, combed her hair, looked at her arms and shoulders. Finally she put out the light and lay down. Above her Ambrose stirred a few times; the springs creaked; she heard his breathing. He was a sound sleeper, and he had had a few drinks. She heard all the familiar noises of the ship, the pounding, the creaking, the swishing. The wall of the cabin vibrated steadily; and the vessel rolled slowly with the ground swell. Through the window of their outside-room Mrs. Farnham saw a light; they were not far off the Jersey coast now. The



light moved slowly across the window and disappeared.

Mrs. Farnham lay awake, her eyes open. She threw back the blankets and let the wind blow on her arms and shoulders. Her heart beat loudly in her ears. Occasionally she brushed her bare shoulders with her lips. The skin was warm and smooth, like a girl's. She was still young. Was not a new admirer awaiting her? Her thoughts whirled about him in a confused rapture. Never, she thought, would she forget this night. The bell on the bridge tolled off three strokes. She looked at the luminous dial of her wrist watch. Half-past one. In a quarter of an hour she could start to dress.

## V

SHE sat on the edge of the bunk and groped in the darkness for her clothing. The springs of her bed had creaked appallingly, but her husband, snoring gently, had not stirred. The ship was noisy, thank heaven! She would have to be careful of the catch on the door; it clicked sharply when opened. It was very cold. There was something furtive, sordid, and distressing about all this. Why could not people love as children play, simply, as a matter of course? Why did the thing have to be hedged about with so much regulation and restraint—and deception. That almost spoiled it all. Well, she knew what she was doing. The world was full of unbearable restrictions, and there was only one way of meeting them. The game was worth the candle. But she would have to look out for the catch on the door. And if Ambrose should awake, what would she tell him? She would have to have a story ready. That she had left her purse in the saloon? That might do. Better, that she had a headache and wanted to go out on deck. But anyhow Ambrose would not wake up.

Suddenly Mrs. Farnham heard rapid footsteps outside on the deck.

One of the officers of the ship? It would look queer if she was seen. She felt increasingly uncomfortable. A chill passed over her whole body, and there was a dry, bitter taste in her mouth. There was nothing to be afraid of, she told herself, but fear held her in its net. The footsteps passed, then returned. The man seemed to be standing at the door in uncertainty. There was a rapping on the lattice-work, then a loud and insistent call:

"Mr. Farnham! Mr. Farnham!"

Mrs. Farnham, in her silk underclothing, slipped precipitately back into her bed and drew the covers over her. She trembled violently. What was the matter? An absurd notion came into her head: she was to be denounced forthwith! What a coward she was! In the upper berth her husband gurgled and woke up with a sharp gasp.

"What is it?" he called indistinctly.

"A wireless message for you, sir. Will you open the door?"

Mr. Farnham, muttering, turned on the light and came stumbling down from his elevated bed.

"I wouldn't have awakened you, sir," explained the senior operator, Crosby, "but I think it's important. The instructions were for immediate delivery."

"Quite all right; much obliged," grunted Farnham, closing the door, and, swaying on his feet, his eyelids sticking together, he slowly tore open the envelope. His wife watched him, and although her thought was on the contents of the message which he held in his hand, she was conscious at the same time of his gross, awkward body as he stood there; the bald head; the round, loose-skinned face. As he read the radiogram his lower jaw dropped suddenly, he stooped closer to the paper, his eyes opened wide. He swallowed convulsively and his larynx gave a great leap.

"What's wrong, Ambrose?" exclaimed Mrs. Farnham.



Ambrose looked at her for an instant, as if bewildered; then, speaking very slowly, he said:

"Pitters . . . he's dead. This says he died this afternoon. . . . Elton is up at the house. The message is from Elton. I can hardly believe it. My God . . . Pitters!" The head of the firm.

Mrs. Farnham had once met Judge Pitters, an elderly jurist with a white mustache streaked across his vermillion face. The news of his death, coming so unexpectedly, shocked her a little, but after all she hardly knew him, and he had no longer been young.

"What did he die of?" she asked her husband. He inspected the telegram again.

"Doesn't say. Influenza, do you think?"

"Maybe. He was pretty old, wasn't he?"

"He was sixty-seven. Still, he was an active man. He looked fine when I saw him last. I'm all shaken up, Nan, that's a fact." Farnham sat down and passed his hand unsteadily over his mouth.

"What effect will this have on the firm, Ambrose?" asked his wife. She was a practical woman.

"It means almost certainly that I get taken into the firm very shortly. It's a good thing for me. It seems wrong to say that, but you know, it means a great deal to us. Of course I'm sorry for Pitters and his family—but it means fifteen thousand a year for me, sooner than I had expected."

Mr. Farnham, as the first emotion wore off, spoke excitedly of his prospects, of the dead man's habits, of how things would be at the office the next day. He would have to attend the funeral, of course, and flowers must be ordered as soon as possible after they landed. After a lull he burst out again:

"God! When I remember Pitters arguing before the master in equity in that Stylice-Bright interference before I left, it doesn't seem possible

he's dead." And he began to speak again of the incidental advantages of the senior member's taking off. He even became demonstrative and, kneeling at his wife's bedside, he kissed her.

"Well, old girl," he said softly, "now you can have a new car if you like." He did not even notice what she had on. Mrs. Farnham touched his cheek with hers, and admonished him:

"Go back to bed, Ambrose. There's nothing you can do now, and you'll need your strength tomorrow." Mr. Farnham kissed her again, and climbed obediently up to his berth. Standing on the ladder, he added generously:

"I'll become a member of the C. C. now, if you still want me to."

"Yes, dear." The concession gave her a twinge. The springs creaked and the light was put out. She looked immediately at her watch. It was nearly half-past two.

She lay still, trying to think. The arrival of the message had sobered her. It had been received five minutes later she would have been out of the room and her husband would have looked for her. And generally she now felt out of the mood. Was it worth while? It *would* be rather beastly. Did she really love Nixon? She could not see him again; he was so seldom in New York, and anyhow it would be too unsafe. An intrigue looked simple enough when one reads about it in Schnitzler, but when one tried it oneself there were such discouraging practical difficulties, for her, at any rate. She was too old to be reckless. Ambrose was disagreeable, it was true; but it was not his fault, and he would be earning fifteen thousand dollars a year. They could be very comfortable on fifteen thousand. Besides, with their augmented income they might travel again soon. There was Los Angeles. She had always wanted to visit Los Angeles.

But as soon as Mrs. Farnham had

made up her mind to remain soberly in her room, the image of the young wireless operator presented itself supplicatingly to her eyes. Was he waiting for her? It was a quarter of three. She thought of the episode in the radio room, of the dancing, and how Nixon had kissed her. With the recollection the mood of those moments returned in all its force. Everything else seemed empty and meaningless. Could the fifteen thousand dollars compensate her for the loss of love, youth, caresses?

She was forty. A man of forty was one thing, a woman of forty, something far different. Desire and fear tugged at her; vague impulses and half-formed thoughts, like the confused shouting of a disorderly crowd, rose ceaselessly into her consciousness. Only one thing stood out clearly, the picture of Nixon. What would he think? All night he would wait, suffering and hoping, listening for her footsteps. It was this that decided her. She felt she must go to him.

She waited until the ship's bell struck seven times: half-past three. Then Mrs. Farnham softly called her husband's name. He made no answer. She dressed and stole to the door. One of her joints cracked sharply. She stopped, terrified, but Ambrose slept on. Then she found herself out on deck. Stealthily she made her way forward. There was a light. He was waiting, as her heart had told her he would be.

Mrs. Farnham looked fearfully up and down the deck, then she opened the door and slipped in.

For an instant the light dazzled her. It was as if the room moved. She saw nothing. Immediately everything steadied. Nixon lay on a couch on his back, his mouth slightly open. Mrs. Farnham looked at him avidly, her lips quivering. Then she saw that he was asleep.

For a whole minute she stood gazing at him somberly. Something was slipping from her with each slow

breath of the sleeping youth. Mrs. Farnham seemed to be unable to speak or move. Suddenly she caught herself and began to edge back step by step. But at the door she stopped, and reaching back toward the light, turned the switch. It was dark. If he slept, let him sleep well. Mrs. Farnham softly closed the door. She crept back to her bed, undressed quickly, and lay awake, sobbing with her face in the pillow. She was still awake when the gray mist of dawn crept over the ocean. It had been a long night.

## VI

In the morning she remained in her cabin as long as possible. She hoped she would not meet Nixon. Through him she had been unfaithful to her husband, actually if not according to the legal definition; yet Nixon was not her lover. It was all so confused and unintelligible. If he had been awake the thing would have been different. What was the use of worrying about it? As he was on duty from eight o'clock to the time that the ship docked she did not expect to see him again, and so it turned out. At intervals she could not help thinking of him. No one would ever kiss her again as he had kissed her, she was sure of that. Well, in a hundred years it would be all the same. A hundred years? Twenty, or less. Mrs. Farnham did not care if it was less.

After the ship had passed Quarantine she went up on the forward deck with her husband. He had forgotten that it was her birthday. For the past few years he had always forgotten it. Usually he remembered a few days later, and contritely brought her some present. They were passing the Statue of Liberty. Mrs. Farnham turned her back to it and stood looking out over the borough of Brooklyn. Somewhere back of that mess of houses and smoke and towers was their home. And she was forty. The fifth decade was upon her.

## Two Portraits

*By Jay Jarrod*

TALL and straight, gray about the ears, wrinkled, bronzed, worldly, perfect poise, egotistical, an ideal host, fastidious, a sense of the æsthetic, ethically hazy, flattering, fearless, agnostic, occasionally given to deception, always generous and utterly worthless.

Medium height and round-shouldered, yellow hair, outspoken, hail-fellow-well-met, replete with "funny stories," not particular about comfort, forceful, pushing, always on the alert, unworldly, shrewd, at times tactless, somewhat hypocritical, a success.



### One

*By M. G. Sabel*

OUT of clear skies  
One star  
Shining brighter than all others.  
Out of the ground one flower  
Sweeter than all the other sweet flowers.  
Out of countless myriads of people. . .



# The Mauve Decade

[An Essay]

By Thomas Beer

## I

IN 1890 an editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* wrote to a lad in Kansas that, "for reasons veiled to me, New York City has become the national capital of arts and letters." This is significant, perhaps. The fact had been patent for half a century to European diplomats, harlots and cooks. Admission from Boston meant that the American intelligence had absorbed a point. It is more important that, in 1890, the leading publican of Philadelphia transferred to Broadway his bars, his liquors and his sacred calling. The city sat invested. The nation bowed.

Histories of New York are foolishly like histories of England written by men reared in the Imperial tradition. Both retrospects are mixed and discolored by delusions of grandeur. The commentator on New York confuses the present importance of his island, its society, its habits, its stamp on national affairs with its early, shabby record. The modern Englishman forgets the purely Continental view of his island in, let's say, 1460 and 1670. It seems to the New Yorker current that New York always was, inevitably, a metropolis. It seems to an Englishman of 1921 that his nation's breath abated emperors ever since Elizabeth. Yet any candid reading of World history shows that England, before her adventure against Napoleon, was only fitfully considered worth courting and any reasonable exploration of American legend will show that New York, until her inglorious advertisement under

William Marcy Tweed, was an entity of debatable powers.

The battle against Tweed was the first actual notice to the United States that New York was anything but a vulgar, sprawling seaport through which bred Bostonians, Philadelphians and Southerners passed on their way to Liverpool or Cherbourg. Any ass who has the patience can write laws, bank balances and popular songs for a people; the true friend of a commonwealth is he who shows forth her vices, luxuries and stupidities. Tweed gutted New York and made her a metropolis by the indirect exhibition of her wealth and sins. Her society showed itself aligned for or against him and thus informed the land that there was, in Manhattan, a collection of people not subject to public bribery or given to consorting with male and female thugs. This was news. And many a family now efflorescent owes its rise to the accident that the investigators couldn't prove dirty linen in its financial closet.

The disclosures of corruption were, of course, much more effective as an attraction to colonists. A list of the known gambling hells, bars and mansions of joy in the Pacific towns before the Civil War proves this. There were far more "Boston Bars, Philadelphia Sam's Eating Houses, Baltimore Kate's Parlors" in California than there were resorts named for New York. 1871 changed all that. 1871 changed, too, the tone of subterranean literature. The pamphlets on gay life, printed by Unitarian pewholders in Massachusetts for the delight of farmhands, miners

and cowboys, were altered. I have seen one specimen that precisely displays the change. The gaudy, faded cover shows an engraving of a youth surrounded by globular wenches in a winery under the title, "Harry's New York Holiday." The inner print tells of Harry's galumphings among the collapsed vestals of Chestnut Street. It's all rather dull but so were the doings of the time. Still, the stuff had its effect. Youngsters with a hundred dollars from the sale of father's farm in Vermont now got them to Broadway to spend it and stayed thereabouts to earn carfare homeward. And then stayed. Of such are the beginning plutocrats and lavatory attendants. William Graham Sumner wrote a stately and accurate essay on the matter in 1886 but no one read it, probably. Moody and Sankey were the popular ethnologists of the epoch.

By 1890, then, New York had achieved a national halo of advertisement. A suction began. The city drew wealth eastward. It was, somehow, understood that fashion, culture and sin had fixed a centre. The reigning families saw themselves jostled among persons affluent and even more provincial. They took telepathic counsel's advice, gritted their teeth and went in for vulgarity on the vaster scale. Mentally vulgar always, they put on the vestments.

Europe provided the pattern. In England, the Victorian gloom was breaking up under the influence of the South African and Australian millionaires, the impatient gayeties of the Prince of Wales, the whole movement in which Oscar Wilde was the devilish shepherd. France had got over the debacle of 1870 and was sizzling. Industrialism, colonial exploitation and knavery flung up vulgarisms and embedded them in realms heretofore exclusive. Began an immense comedy of ostentation and this fevered the imitative American. Were London and Paris jaunty? New York would be that same or burst a blood vessel! Jean Baptiste Martin said, "Before 1890

most New Yorkers did not know of any drinks except champagne and whisky. By 1895 one could find the best wines of Europe in second-class Broadway restaurants." In 1890, only twenty-eight houses advertised as dealing in oil paintings. In 1900, there were two hundred and eighty-five. A city hitherto socially timid and retired awoke to the brutal, enjoyable advantages of glitter and glittered like a Christmas grocer's window. It had possessed no public life worth mention. It began the parade still maintained and, after all, alluring in the edge of its twilight. It had ten years of an absolute, intoxicating greatness which will, I think, be shown as its carnation period when the roll of American cities is formally called in the vaporous hereafter.

The carnation hadn't much scent for anyone with nasal adaptations more subtle than those of a cabman or railway worker. But there was a flavor. Things happened. Victor Herbert arrived to teach the world that light music might be enriched by a sufficiency of violins and something better than a single horn in the teeth of a retired military bugler. The Frohmans, abetted by Belasco, began to produce stage settings that put Augustin Daly on his mettle. The church commenced denunciations of the stage with appetizing vigor. The unholy show at the Metropolitan Opera lost its languid chill and became that seething sty which forbids itself to anyone not divested of his rational dread of hog cholera. Prostitution grew perky and wore frills. Divorce set in. And midway of the decade Anna Held appeared, casting in her lot with Sheol, to establish herself as the nation's lovely ideal of symmetrical sin in the minds of schoolboys, virtuous women past thirty and lumberjacks.

## II

You may take Anna Held as a symbol of the completed effect. An importation, she was conceded to the grown demand for something racy, succulent, sophisticated. She was obvious,



suave, invested with fabrications. She was a tabloid of European vice as retailed by Cook's tourists to homekeeping bodies. She was New York of the '90s. Nothing surpassed her. Otero failed. Yvette Guilbert had a success of the palest esteem. Olga Nethersole, with all the violent wind of the "Sappho" scandal behind her, couldn't come abreast. Anna Held took root and flowers still in a thousand cheap variations wherever a vaudeville palace sheds its glimmer on the roadway of Main Street. Eighty years hence, I dare say, editors of anthologies will purse their lips over Carl Sandburg's little lament for the woman and cut it out of the section permitted his remains; Sandburg was never so truly national as in his elegy of the little goddess whose bust and groomed arms adorned boxstalls, prep school bedrooms and the battered wood of roaming cabooses where males lounged and phallic gossip went circling in the spew of cheap tobacco. She bored me to shrieks. She influenced the culture of America as much and as broadly as did Harriet Beecher Stowe and Louisa May Alcott.

Here enters Satan. How did the national letters get along in the parade? Where were the native arts? There was a vast clatter of hansoms. Men sat, in stiff shirts, drinking refined wines in Delmonico's and spoke of Gustave Flaubert who was dead and didn't care. They spoke of Tolstoi. They spoke, rather feebly, of Maeterlinck (he was alive and heard). They spoke, until the topic stopped in a smell of carbolic mastering musk, of Oscar Wilde. Led on by his sheer Methodism, they chanted Rudyard Kipling.

It was almost refined. Edwin Abbey and John Sargent were stirring the burghers of London to their depths with the deplorable consequence that the City of Boston took them seriously, on the rebound, and visiting schoolmarmes now gaze with mild passion at their acts in pigment. Thin voices sometimes reported that someone named Pyle was affecting Anglo-Saxon illustration and that kind things had

been said of him by such as Rodin and Manet. But the man lived in Delaware. He hadn't been made an R. A. He was then, nothing much. Arose vague burblings about a Stephen Crane, supposed to be in town. He never dined at Delmonico's. Young Mr. Newton Booth Tarkington, come up from Princeton, anxious to survey and revere this Crane, found him fled. The city had starved the author of "Maggie," "The Red Badge of Courage" and "The Open Boat." He went his silent way through journalism to exile and early death, the least concessive to the herd of all American artists of his time. Honor destroyed him. Hearing that honor had finished the job, Mr. Richard Harding Davis broke into honest tears and cried, "Poor Steve! And he'd had nothing, nothing!"

Mr. Richard Harding Davis, on the other hand, had a great deal. He put on the world as a garment and it fitted him, superbly. He had the physique. He moved gently, he moved genially. The hansom clattered along and contained his athletic torso in the stiffest of well-laundered shirts. He was cordially pleased, they say, when strangers took him for an Englishman. He wrote tales about nice millionaires who were decent to chorus girls. He wrote tales about nice girls who were decent to soldiers of fortune. He gazed about on decency and, pretty faithfully, transcribed the motions of Anglomania. He has been officially damned to hell as a cad and so forth by Philip Littell. He makes a curious figure, this jolly freshman of fiction, who hunted bread money for Crane, hunted readers for Huneker and jumped into yelling print on behalf of Stanford White when the companions of White's diversions were in full flight and scrupulous gentlemen in art were denying that they'd ever shaken hands with such a fellow. *Quo les roses restent sur le tombeau!*

In the midst of all these sunny pools and trim lawns shot up subsided fountains. "Mlle. New York" gabbled vivaciously for a time and passed. "The Criterion" fleetly flourished. "Collier's

## THE MAUVE DECADE

Weekly" printed "The Blue Hotel" and "The Turn of the Screw," then swooned sensibly, as the century ended. Nothing on the level of "The Yellow Book" or "The Biblot" appeared, and with reason. The decade was Anglomaniac in manner, but its adopted feathers, such as they were, were Gallic, Teutonic, Roman. I have grubbed out but one version of Aubrey Beardsley and that is a burlesque, far from witless. If Wilde had an imitator, it was the sanitary and genteel Edgar Saltus. The gibberings and perfumes of the English decadents seem to have roused no admiration. Indeed, they roused no interest. The England popular and to be cherished was the England of Barrie, of Mrs. Ward, of Benson and Kipling. D'Annunzio was talked about. Arthur Symons wasn't. Sudermann shook the nerves of intellectual virgins. Lionel Johnson didn't. I discover paragraphs on the youthful André Gide, utterly forgotten in America for twenty years and now raging, belated in Greenwich Village, jumbled with Jean Cocteau, Proust, Larbaud and the rest. Henry Harland never had an American public until he took to making pretty, diluted pastels of Italy. Shaw was slinging daggers about London and a reputable critic of the drama blandly announced him as a Yankee when Richard Mansfield mounted "The Devil's Disciple." Outside such patent objects as Kipling and Barrie, the English counter wasn't selling much in the bazaar.

A bazaar! I suppose the feckless show is best left at that. There was, at last, an American market place for French gilt furniture, English clothes, German wines. Certain earnest and kindly men went about, happily rubbing their hands, glad that the people beheld, La Farge, Pollard, Matthews, Willcox. They said, "We improve," in hopeful tones and, perhaps, they thought so. There was a terrific, vivid blooming under the bulbs shaded in Imperial silks. The hansoms clattered, there was a constant, stimulant hiss of soft fabrics over shoulders more and more naked. Clyde Fitch wrote

plays. The gentility of the city backed the war in Cuba and some well-washed lads even got themselves killed. A descendant of a secondary Knickerbocker family was elected Vice-President of the United States. Twelve French portrait painters declared that American women were charming. Hotel upon hotel opened and dazzled drummers. There were Socialists. Jacob Riis wailed about the East Side and Jay Hambridge drew most excellent pictures for his articles. Charles Dana Gibson produced a society in ink and the society of flesh tried to imitate it. Savages from the West really painted and sobbed at the doors. It was wonderful. Well, what came of it?

Obviously, nothing came of it. The sickly truth is that the Genius of Manhattan is not a crowned woman but a customs house clerk. Being asked by an English admirer why he didn't live in New York, Howard Pyle wrote:

"Granting that there are many people in New York who possess great taste and charming manners, the society of the city is little interested in native ideas and native art, and such a society does not interest me."

Does it interest any intelligent wanderer more keenly, after a quarter of a century? Hardly.

The curse on New York is the curse of salt water. The city and its society remain a docking space for European notions, mostly junk. To argue that capitalism, *per se*, froze New York is the final stupidity. The truth is that the money-bag didn't father, as it has done elsewhere, any tonic pride in its possessors. They were too accessible. Europe came in a hurry to decorate, to conciliate them. They hadn't time to develop their own idiocies, even, but draped themselves in those of London, Paris and Rome. The tradition they established was one of servitude. The metropolitan bulk may swell, still, but its vitality was expended twenty years ago. The spirit passes inland. Here rises a mortuary scent. One hears the pulse of wings and ravenous shadows circle on the fading scene.

S.S. Feb 1922

## The Recent Plays

By George Jean Nathan

### I

SOUND and charming sentiment is impossible to a dramatist who does not constitutionally and philosophically view sex as either a humorous or a transient thing. The engaging full-bodied sentiment of humorous sex distilled by such writers as de Caillavet and de Flers and the equally engaging and equally full-bodied sentiment of transitory sex distilled by such as Arthur Schnitzler persistently evade the playwright who sees sex otherwise. It is paradoxical but true, indeed, that a dramatist generically sentimental is rarely able to write winning sentiment—the only exception that comes to mind at the moment being Barrie. The general American playwright thus labours under a double handicap in that, being an American, he is a sentimentalist by nature, and in that, being a sentimentalist by nature, he is able to conceive of sex in but one of two ways: either as a Sunday School or as the third act of "King Lear." That is to say, he is brought to view sex either as something sweet and sacred, or as something dramatic and stormful. The result is a drama wherein the sex organs are located, in the first instance, two inches to the left in the upper portion of the thorax or, in the second, in the bronchial tubes and *caruncula lacrymalis*. In this the American playwright betrays himself particularly when he essays the business of adapting the plays of dramatists constituted differently from himself. Their words, their situations, the externals of their characters he is able to translate, but

their philosophies, their emotions, their charm and humour he is unable to adapt. He is unable to do this for the same reason that a Frenchman is unable to look right in a derby hat, or that a Viennese is unable to drink rye whiskey, or that an Italian is unable to sing a ragtime song. These things are alien to him and, whatever his affectation and pretence, they do not fit him or suit him.

Although one might find something more apt than Mr. Belasco's adaptation of André Picard's "Kiki" to illuminate this argument, since Mr. Belasco was doubtless prompted to an extent by commercial motives in devitalizing the sex philosophy of the original, the adaptation may yet be taken as a not bad example of what happens in such circumstances. I do not mean to say, of course, that Mr. Belasco has not manoeuvred his adaptation with all of his customary high box-office sagacity, but this sagacity is accompanied by a personal exposé that is peculiarly exophthalmic. (Some good friend, incidentally, should warn Dr. Belasco from his recent penchant for program notes: he has become his own worst critical enemy.) For example, here the confession that so nicely supports the contention with which I have begun this review: "Kiki is somewhat of a puzzle and the American adapter frankly confesses that he was much perplexed in several scenes as to the keynote of her mood; and as to when she was and when she was not in earnest. In fact, she 'wanted knowing'."

More follows and, save one suspect Mr. Belasco of deliberate hocus-pocus,

where a more lucid give-away of the American adapter? For Kiki and her moods are as clear as day to even the most innocent Frenchman and, one ventures to say, to any other man who has not sophisticated his vision of the original play with a touch of either moral cowardice or commercial bravery. Picard is a sort of inferior, immature Guitry; his work is clever work, but no more profound or elusive than that of Romain Coolus who, of the present-day boulevard playwrights, may perhaps most closely be compared with him. Nor are his character, philosophy and mood of the gamine Kiki at any point any more incognizable than those, say, of that other boulevard study in the same quarter, the "Gamine" of Veber and de Gorsse. She is simply a hoyden who thinks of sex, if she thinks of it at all, as essentially comic and transient and who is therefore, in the eyes of the Frenchman, the charming, sentimental heroine of a play whose other characters, made to view sex somewhat more seriously, are to him neither charming nor sentimental, but villains. Mr. Belasco apparently cannot persuade himself to believe this, for he adds, in his program note, "This (the riddle of Kiki) was the problem facing me in my version of this comedy of the heart—for surely it may be called a comedy of the heart, if hearts do play at comedy."

There you have it. If hearts do play at comedy!

Somehow I cannot believe that Mr. Belasco is so constipated as all this. Having in mind his program note to "The Return of Peter Grimm" (a memorable dose of spiritualist blarney with benign quotations from Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor James H. Hyslop, Hereward Carrington, Anna Eva Fay, Thurston the Great and other authorities) and his note to "The Case of Becky" (a rich summary of evidence from such psychological experts, I recall, as Professor Hyslop, Camille Flammarion, the Rev. Percy Stickney Grant, H. Addington Bruce, Mercedes the Mind Reader, the Zancigs and Morris Gest)—having in mind, as I say,

these past performances of his, I can't but believe that the good Mons. Belasco is not once again up to his old dido of impressing and hornswoggling the susceptibles. This belief becomes especially strong when I hear his adapted Kiki wistfully and with a perfectly straight face inform her lover in the last act that she is "a good girl," after she has been kept by him and has lived in his rooms for a week. Of course, had Mr. Belasco meant this for irony, it would have been excellent humour, and within the intention of the original text; but he does not mean it so. He means it seriously by way of placating whatever moral trepidations his audience may feel. You can't tell me that he himself doesn't have to laugh at such nonsense. No man who has appreciated the work of Bahr, Guitry and Molnar enough to give it an American hearing can possibly be so provincial. No, our old friend is spoofing again.

Miss Lenore Ulric's performance of the role of Kiki is the sole excuse for the production of the adaptation, an adaptation—like nine-tenths of the French adaptations we get—which is a mere sediment of the original. The sparkle, the life, the flavour and body are gone—just as they were gone from the local versions of "Faisons Un Rêve," "La Villa Primerose," "Occupe Toi d'Amélie," "Papa," "La Belle Aventure," "L'Amour Veille" and many another—and what remains are only the sentimental dregs. These Miss Ulric electrifies with what is in the main a thoroughly admirable performance, full of humour, surly sentiment and sharp pictorial quality. Save for a few moments of obstreperous caricature at the end of the middle act, due to curiously ill-advised direction, her work is of a finish that one rarely encounters in such roles on the Paris stage. The French farce-comedy actress, for all the testimony of our critics who become great authorities on the Paris theatre in two or three weeks during the summer vacation months, is in general distinctly inferior to our own players in the same species of drama.

I know of none the equal of Miss Ulric, unless it be that matchless transplanted boulevard comedienne, Irene Bordoni. Miss Ulric's support in the present exhibit is less histrionic than support in the literal sense. Since the manuscript calls for the carrying of Miss Ulric around the stage at frequent intervals, and since that lady is not, so to speak, puny, the cast has perforce been chosen for size rather than talent.

## II

IN the instance of "La Souriante Madame Beaudet," by Denys Amiel and André Obey, the Theatre Guild wisely refrained from adaptation and merely translated the original. Here, of course, there was no sex question to consider, yet we have had so many cases where, even in the complete absence of sex, the French scene, mood and philosophy have been transported in toto to Brooklyn or New Rochelle that an exception is noteworthy. The play, here called "The Wife With a Smile," is a moderately amusing study in domestic irritations, employing not without a measure of theatrical ingenuity an undercurrent of revolver melodrama to achieve the sense of suspensive interest that the theme itself lacks. The attempt at character drawing is not especially successful; the colours are too thickly laid on; the husband and wife, so far as they are of recognizable type at all, are italics. Yet out of the din of exaggeration there comes occasionally an echo of something well observed and true. Mr. Arnold Daly, as the husband who drives his wife to thoughts of murder, gave his best performance since "The Master"; and Miss Blanche Yurka, though still given to her familiar Jane Cowl imitation, was not bad in the opposite role. The play was preceded by Georges Courteline's old and mediocre farce, "Boubouroche," badly acted.

## III

MISS GRACE GEORGE retained her long hold on the prize belt for Amer-

ica's worst picker of plays by selecting, from a comparative wealth of available material, a disastrously amateurish made-to-order manuscript written around the career of Marie Antoinette and bearing that name as title. The labour of Miss Margaret Mayo and Aubrey Kennedy, the exhibit revealed its utter lack of worth in the first fifteen minutes of playing time: a Mrs. Jarley's wax works made vocal with the stereotyped highfalutinisms of historical drama. Mr. William A. Brady, who is said to have lost \$40,000 on the production, has for twenty-five years been the most adept handler of mobs in the American theatre. It is something of a pity that Mr. Brady is unable to condense his virtuosity in this direction and handle his wife.

## IV

To Miss Zoë Akins' "The Varying Shore," there is style, manner, a point of view and a feeling for beauty, but there is no drama. Nor by drama do I mean the conventional theatrical alarms and excursions, but drama that either sneaks slowly or springs abruptly from characters vitally, sympathetically and imaginatively considered. The trouble with the talented playwright in question, as I see it, is that she is progressively writing less and less of human beings and more and more of Broadway star actors. The result is confusion worse confounded, for Miss Akins is too much the intrinsic artist shamelessly to let herself go full tilt at the box-office and its cheap Broadway plaudits and yet too little the undeviating artist to forget them altogether. Thus her later plays have become neither the one thing nor the other: neither the first-rate art of her remarkable "Papa" nor the tenth-rate but highly prosperous sub-art of her Broadway confrères. The beginnings of her attempt to compromise with herself—the beginnings of the Zoë Akins who hoped stealthily to straddle the two stools of respectable drama and box-office reward without falling between them with too much



betraying noise—were visible in "De-classée," an exceptionally foxy dove-tailing of good and bad. The attempt to turn the same trick in "Daddy's Gone A-Hunting" was less successful (here the bad got much the better of the good); and now the attempt to turn the trick a third time in "The Varying Shore" is less successful still, for here the bad has triumphed over the good to an even greater degree. Well, glory lies not that way, nor wealth. Either Miss Akins must conclude for once and all time to remain an artist or to become a hack.

This latest play of hers has an available underlying idea—the futility of self-sacrifice—but, once the artist Miss Akins has conceived the idea, in rushes the box-office Miss Akins to sentimentalize it out of all countenance and lay it low. The play as a whole, indeed, is a fencing match between Miss Akins-Jekyll and Miss Akins-Hyde, with the latter scoring a dozen *touchés* to the former's one. Thus, for one scene like that in the second act between the woman and her young lover—a scene written with finish, understanding and no fear of Rialto hell—we have a dozen scenes such as those wherein Mother Love, the Old Family Bridal Veil, the Happiness of Old Age and kindred damp hokums play a leading part.

Although I traded my copy of Mr. William Archer's Manual of Playmaking at the beginning of my critical career for a large cuspidor, and though I unquestionably know infinitely less (and care infinitely less) about the making of popular plays than anyone else in Christendom, it yet seems to me that as dangerous a way to go about the business of confecting such a play is to follow Miss Akins' principle in the present instance. "The Varying Shore" begins with a prologue, laid in 1921, wherein the audience is assured that the heroine is dead and that she found great happiness in her later years. The first act shows her in 1870, very unhappy and assuring the audience that she was unhappier still in 1859. The second act shows her in 1859, very, very

unhappy, assuring the audience that she was even unhappier than that in 1847. The third act shows her in 1847, excessively and superlatively unhappy, and then a short epilogue pops up to continue the prologue's assurance of the happiness she found after the play proper with all its unhappiness was over. As I say, I am no authority on such subjects, but it seems to me that this technique is akin to that of a play which would show in its prologue a Falstaffian old gentleman with gout and glucosuria from too much indulgence in rich foods and vintage wines and then switch back twenty-five years and ask me to get excited because he was apparently about to die of starvation and thirst in the desert. If a play has not suspense of action, it surely must have suspense of character, and Miss Akins' has neither. It is over, in both senses, before it begins. In the popular play "On Trial," constructed like "The Varying Shore" with time in backward flight, suspense was achieved by making the play proper merely counterpoint to the direct suspensive action in the courtroom, to which scene the play within the play switched at the beginning and end of every act.

I observe that some of my colleagues have criticized Miss Elsie Ferguson severely for the lugubrious monotony of the voice with which she reads her lines. Although it is quite true that the actress has a naturally monotonous voice (which I like), it seems to me that on this particular occasion it is less strictly a case of the voice with which she reads the lines being lugubriously monotonous than the lines which her voice is compelled to read being lugubriously monotonous. The role of the unhappy heroine is written entirely upon a single string of an Hawaiian guitar; to ask in such a circumstance for a larynx that is other than *piagnevole*—to demand that it also be now *fastoso*, now *indifferente*, and now *altisonante*—is to ask and demand of a bass drum that it play the B minor scherzo of Chopin.

## V

WILLIAM GILLETTE'S "The Dream Maker" is a melodramatic crook caricature of Lothar Schmidt's ironic farce-comedy, "Only A Dream." In it Mr. Gillette has incorporated all the old reliables which he has been able to recall out of his long stage experience, from the trick of getting the crooks' fingerprints by upsetting the ink over the blue-print of the Anheuser-Busch brewery to the business of coolly facing the villain's loaded pistol, and from the device of causing the elegant and very *déagé* crooks to descend, when alone, to the hully-gee form of speech to the situation wherein the hero discovers that the girl in danger is none other than the daughter of his boyhood sweetheart. Founded on a scenario by Howard E. Morton, the opus provides Mr. Gillette with the good old-fashioned opportunity of dropping his voice to a nervous whisper and cowering furtively, shoulders huddled, before dangers that seem always to be imminent but that never materialize. A curiously engaging actor, this Gillette. A mere histrionic decoy-duck, it may be true, but all the same one of the most thoroughly watchable performers on our stage. The supporting company, which is eminently mediocre, is composed of actors most of whom are doubtless members in good standing of the American Federation of Labor.

## VI

THE selection of Miss Margaret Mower to play the role of the exotic slave girl Zora in Gladys Unger's "The Fair Circassian" was quite as happy as would be the choice of Ed Wynn for the role of the irresistible lover in Rostand's "Last Night of Don Juan." Not that it mattered much the one way or the other, considering the melancholy aspect of the Unger opus; yet it reminded one of the recent casting in the role of a *tuberculeuse* of a buxom young lady who, upon her death-bed, suggested fibroid phthisis infinitely less

than indigestion from a dozen or so filets mignons and apple pies. Miss Mower may be able to suggest many things in the theatre, but one of them that she cannot suggest is a sinuous, sensuous Kabardan slave. Her Circassian girl was never for a moment anything but a young miss from Greenwich Village in a white gauze bodice and red pants. Of the play, as I have implied, silence is courtesy. An attempt to satirize the English through the eyes of a Persian, it revealed little save a weak paraphrase of W. J. Locke's "Morals of Marcus Ordeyne" in which were incorporated a number of equally weak paraphrases of the satirical quips of William Archer's Rajah in "The Green Goddess."

## VII

It has taken but ten years for the New York play reviewers to come to the conclusion that Mr. George Broadhurst's "Bought and Paid For" is not the amazing masterpiece they believed it to be. The most amusing thing concerned with its revival, indeed, is a turning back to the criticisms written upon its original production and a comparison of them with those written by the same men today. The very reviewers who now conclude that the play is only "a piece of exaggerated sensationalism, surrounded by all the old and familiar devices of comic relief" were the same who, ten years ago, set it down as a first-rate, vital American drama. "Bought and Paid For" is just what it always was: an empty piece of theatricalism with its big scene culled from Brieux's "Maternité" and with one very roughly, but divertingly, observed minor character. The present production seems to me to be acted quite as well as the original and is further given a very tony and *recherché* touch by causing the millionaire Stafford to open his dinner with champagne.

Another revival, that of the late Paul Armstrong's "Alias Jimmy Valentine," brings back a popular melodrama of considerable lingering vitality. Origin-

nally revealed a dozen years back, it is today a livelier and fresher thing of its kind that nine-tenths of the melodramas written in the intervening period. Mr. Otto Kruger is better in the name role than H. B. Warner was; but Miss Margalo Gillmore misses everything from the heroine's small role that Miss Laurette Taylor contrived to put into it.

## VIII

It is not easy to understand why the producer of Clare Kummer's "The Mountain Man" selected that play when "The Lights of Duxbury," by the same author, was readily available. The latter piece is not up to Miss Kummer's mark, but it surely comes very much nearer that mark than the presented play. It has a droll underlying idea; it has at least one comically imagined character; it has several humorous dialogues; and, while it has also its share of parched spots, it is at every point superior to this other play. "The Mountain Man," for all its moments of delicacy, is threadbare stuff. It finds its author in an incomprehensibly sentimental mood, and without the saving humour that she has hitherto displayed. There is, of course, in even the worst of Miss Kummer's writing a touch of theatrical distinction, and in the most sugary of her sentiment a bit of sophisticated check-rein, yet in the present manuscript banalities pop up so frequently that it is hard to believe the play was written by the same jocund hand that manufactured "Rollo's Wild Oat," "Good Gracious Annabelle" and "A Successful Calamity." The central figure of "The Mountain Man," indeed, is very much less a Kummer than a Rachel Crothers character. And the fable is equally less Kummer than George Scarborough. Sidney Blackmer, though good in several scenes, heightens the bathos of the hero role by playing it in an unremittingly moony manner. The actress cast for the heroine is an amateurish young lady whose speech, elaborately *comme il faut* and excessively modish up to a point, every once in a while suddenly gives way under the strain and ends up

with a "Huh?" or something of the sort. The stage decorations by Robert Edmond Jones are attractive.

## IX

THEODORE DREISER's play, "The Hand of the Potter," which was reviewed at length in this place several years ago when it appeared in book form, finally reached the stage several weeks ago down in the converted delicatessen store that serves as the Provincetown Players' temple of dramatic art. Although the means at the disposal of these amateurs are meagre, the manuscript received a very fair treatment save in two or three particulars, and revealed theatrically the several merits and far greater proportion of demerits that Dreiser achieved in this, his first attempt at a full-length play. The direction, good in the first and second acts, went completely to pieces in the important first scene of the last act, with the result that the best scene in the play, that between the pervert Berchansky and the child Hagar, went for absolutely nothing. Furthermore, I can't quite see why the business at the conclusion of the first act was deleted. It is offensive, true enough, but if the play is to be done at all it is a part of it: as relevantly delete, on the same score, the offensive dialogue between Ansoorge and the Baumerts or the familiar and even more offensive business of the sick weaver from Hauptmann's celebrated drama. The third act of the play is unnecessary, as is the second scene of the fourth act: these are tacked onto the play proper and might be cut out to the manuscript's advantage. But the contention that Dreiser has written the play like a novelist and not a dramatist is foolish. The trouble is that he has written it like an inexperienced dramatist. There is not the slightest suggestion of the novelist in the play, save it be in the long asides.

As I wrote at the time the book appeared, the play exercises an astonishing effect for all its crudities, weaknesses and even absurdities. The performance of J. Paul Jones in the central role was altogether too literal: not a trace of sug-

gestion was permitted to enter into it. But an actress named Dosha Rubinstein was splendid in the role of the sorrowful old mother. The balance of the company ranged from fair to very bad.

## X

IN "Danger," by Cosmo Hamilton, I can detect nothing that merits critical attention. What we engage here is merely another of the author's Union News Company plots made into the form of drama, and that discloses all the elements of drama save originality, insight, imagination, character, wit, humour, philosophy, cultivated point of view, intelligent action and interpretative fancy. The company is headed by H. B. Warner.

The revival of "Trilby" is chiefly interesting in that it has provided our Young Visitors of criticism with the opportunity to observe anew the great change for the better that the last twenty-five years have wrought in the public's theatrical taste, and the opportunity it has provided everybody else to appreciate that the public's theatrical taste is just as bad today as it was when "Trilby" was originally produced. "Trilby," the play, is in good truth pretty tawdry stuff; but its enormous success with the public years ago is duplicated today by the equal success of such equally tawdry stuff as "Peg o' My Heart," "East Is West" and "Lightnin'." The present revival fetches forth Miss Charlotte Walker in the name role, and Wilton Lackaye in his original role of the primordial Sigmund Freud.

## XI

THE tug-o'-war between the managers of the theatres and the managers of the storehouses continues with unabated vigour. The latter gentlemen have been exceptionally fortunate this season, so much so, indeed, that it is commonly reported they have got up a secret fund for the encouragement of all save two or three of our American playwrights and for the further purpose of preventing the theatrical managers from getting wind of such potentially dangerous plays as Hermann Bahr's "The Moment," Sacha Guitry's "Wife, Husband and Lover," Lucien Gleize's "The Golden Calf" and Ludwig Thoma's "Relatives." The wily storehouse impresarios, it is even rumoured, have gone so far as to lead the managers on by investing small sums in the latter's ventures, figuring on a safe margin of profit when the ventures duly fail. In view of this situation, I have a constructive proposal to make. I propose, for the immediate prosperity of the American theatre, that the present producers turn over their theatres to the storehouse managers and that the latter turn over their storehouses to the producers. The theatrical managers have proved that they are ideally suited to the prosperous operation of the storehouses, and the storehouse managers have proved, by the very fact that they have with foresight put all their faith and capital into the storehouse business, that they know considerably more about the theatrical business than those presently engaged in it.



# Frank Harris and Others

By H. L. Mencken

## I

### *A Literary Anatomist*

THOUGH, so far as I know, Frank Harris is a perfectly reputable man, fearing God and obeying the laws, it is not to be gainsaid that a certain flavor of the sinister hangs about his aspect. The first time I ever enjoyed the honor of witnessing him, there bobbed up in my mind (instantly put away as unworthy and unseemly) a memory of the handsome dogs who used to chain shrieking virgins to railway tracks in the innocent, pre-Ibsenish dramas of my youth, the while a couple of stage hands imitated the rumble of the Empire State Express in the wings. There was the same elegance of turn-out, the same black moustachios, the same erect figure and lordly air, the same agate glitter in the eyes, the same aloof and superior smile. A sightly fellow, by all the gods, and one who obviously knew how to sneer. That afternoon, in fact, we had a sneering match, and before it was over most of the great names in the letters and politics of the time, *circa* 1914, had been reduced to faint hisses and ha-has. . . . Well, a sneerer has his good days and his bad days. There are times when his gift gives him such comfort that it can be matched only by God's grace, and there are times when it launches upon him such showers of darts that he is bound to feel a few stings. Harris got the darts first, for the year that he came back to his native land, after a generation of exile, was the year in which Anglomania rose to the dignity of a national religion—and

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what he had to say about the English, among whom he had lived since the early 80's, was chiefly of a very waspish and disconcerting character. Worse, he not only said it, twirling his mustache defiantly; he also wrote it down, and published it in a book. This book was full of shocks for the rapt worshippers of the Motherland, and particularly for the literary *Kanonendelicatessen* who followed the pious leadership of Woodrow and Ochs, Putnam and Roosevelt, Wister and Cyrus Curtis, young Reid and Mrs. Jay. So they called a special meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, sang "God Save the King," kissed the Union Jack, and put Harris into Coventry. And there he remained for five or six long years. The literary reviews never mentioned him. His books were expunged from the minutes. When he was heard of at all, it was only in whispers, and the general burden of those whispers was that he was in the pay of the Kaiser, and plotting to garrot the Rev. Dr. William T. Manning. . . .

So down to a year or two ago. Then the English, with characteristic lack of delicacy, played a ghastly trick upon all those dutiful and well-meaning colonists. That is to say, they suddenly forgave Harris his criminal refusal to take their war buncombe seriously, exhumed him from his long solitude among the Anglo-Ashkenazim, and began praising him in rich, hearty terms as a literary gentleman of the first water, and even as the chief adornment of American letters! The English notices of his "Contemporary Portraits: Second Series" were really quite



amazing. The London *Times* gave him two solid columns—and for once broke its invariable rule of dismissing all Americanos as idiots and nuisances. And where the *Times* led, the *Athenæum* and all the other great organs of English literary opinion followed. The book itself was described as something extraordinary, a piece of criticism full of shrewdness and originality, and the author was treated with the utmost politeness. . . . One imagines the painful sensation in the New York *Times* office, the dismayed groups around far-flung campus pumps, the special meetings of the Princeton, N. J., and Urbana, Ill., American Legions, the secret conference between the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the Ku Klux Klan. But though there was tall talk by hot heads, nothing could be done. Say "Wo!" and the dutiful jack-ass turns to the right; say "Gee!" and he turns to the left. It is too much, of course, to ask him to cheer as well as turn—but he nevertheless turns. For a year or so I have heard no more whispers against Harris from professors and Vigilantes. But on two or three occasions, the subject coming up, I have heard him sneer his master sneer, and each time my blood has run cold.

Well, what is in him? My belief, frequently expressed, is that there is a great deal. His "Oscar Wilde" is, by long odds, the best literary biography ever written by an American—an astonishingly frank, searching and vivid reconstruction of character—a piece of criticism that makes all ordinary criticism seem professorial and lifeless. The Comstocks, I need not say, tried to suppress it; a brilliant light is thrown upon Harris by the fact that they failed ignominiously. All the odds were in favor of the Comstocks; they had patriotism on their side and the help of all the swine who flourished in those days; nevertheless, Harris gave them a severe beating, and scared them half to death. In brief, a man of the most extreme bellicosity, enterprise and courage—a fellow whose ideas are expressed

absolutely regardless of tender feelings, whether genuine or bogus. In "The Man Shakespeare" and "The Women of Shakespeare" he tackled the whole body of academic English critics *en masse*—and routed them *en masse*. The two books, marred perhaps by a too provocative spirit, yet contain the soundest, shrewdest and most convincing criticism of Shakespeare that has ever been written. All the old hocus-pocus is thrown overboard. There is an entirely new examination of the materials, and to the business is brought a knowledge of the plays so ready and so vast that that of even the most learned don begins to seem a mere smattering. The same great grasp of facts and evidences is visible in the sketches which make up the three volumes of "Contemporary Portraits." What one always gets out of them is a feeling that the man knows the men he is writing about—that he not only knows what he sets down, but a great deal more. There is here nothing of the cold correctness of the usual literary "estimate." Warts are not forgotten, whether of the nose or of the immortal soul. The subject, beginning as a political shibboleth or a row of books, gradually takes on all the colors of life, and then begins to move, naturally and freely. I know of no more brilliant evocations of personality in any literature—and most of them are personalities of sharp flavor, for Harris, in his day, seems to have known almost everybody worth knowing, and whoever he knew went into his laboratory for vivisection.

The man is thus a first rate critic of his time, and what he has written about his contemporaries is certain to condition the view of them held in the future. What gives him his value in this difficult field is, first of all and perhaps most important of all, his cynical detachment—his capacity for viewing men and ideas objectively. In his life, of course, there have been friendships and some of them have been strong and long-continued, but when he writes it is with a sort of surgical remoteness, as if the business in hand were vastly more

important than the man. He was lately protesting violently that he was and is quite devoid of malice. Granted. But so is a surgeon. To write of George Moore as he has written may be writing devoid of malice, but nevertheless the effect is precisely that which would follow if some malicious enemy were to drag poor George out of his celibate couch in the dead of night, and chase him naked down Shaftsbury avenue. The thing is appallingly revelatory—and I believe that it is true. The Moore that he depicts may not be absolutely the real Moore, but he is unquestionably far nearer to the real Moore than the Moore of the Moore books. The method, of course, has its defects. Harris is far more interested, fundamentally, in men than in their ideas: the catholic sweep of his "Contemporary Portraits" proves it. In consequence his judgments of books are often colored by his opinions of their authors. He dislikes Mark Twain as his own antithesis: a trimmer and poltroon. *Ergo*, "Huckleberry Finn" is drivel, which leads us, as Euclid hath it, to absurdity. He once had a row with Dreiser. *Ergo*, "Sister Carrie" is nonsense, which is itself nonsense. But I know of no critic who is wholly free from that quite human weakness. In the academic bunkophagi it is everything; they are willing to swallow anything so long as the author is sound upon the League of Nations. It seems to me that such aberrations are rarer in Harris than in most. He may have violent prejudices, but it is seldom that they play upon a man who is honest.

I judge from his frequent discussions of himself—he is happily free from the vanity of mock-modesty—that the pets of his secret heart are his ventures into fiction, and especially, "The Bomb" and "Montes the Matador." The latter has been greatly praised by Arnold Bennett, who has also praised Leonard Merrick. I have read it four or five times, and always with enjoyment. It is a powerful and adept tale; well constructed and beautifully written; it recalls some of the best of the

shorter stories of Thomas Hardy. Alongside it one might range half a dozen other Harris stories—all of them carefully put together, every one the work of a very skilful journeyman. But despite Harris, the authentic Harris is not the story-writer: he has talents, of course, but it would be absurd to put "Montes the Matador" beside "Heart of Darkness." In "Love in Youth" he descends to unmistakable fluff and feebleness. The real Harris is the author of the Wilde volumes, of the two books about Shakespeare, of the three volumes of "Contemporary Portraits." Here there is stuff that lifts itself clearly and brilliantly above the general—criticism that has a terrific vividness and plausibility, and all the gusto that the professors can never pump up. Harris makes his opinions not only interesting, but important. What he has to say always seems novel, ingenious, and true. Here is the chief lifework of an American who, when all values are reckoned up, will be found to have been a sound artist and an extremely intelligent, courageous and original man—and infinitely the superior of the poor dolts who once tried so childishly to dispose of him.

## II

### *Books About Books*

ONE of Harris's most ardent advocates, in the days when the Sulgrave Foundation had him under the ban, was Guido Bruno, then the archbishop of Greenwich Village. Bruno is a fellow who has suffered many disillusionments. His belief that the mountebanks of the Village were genuine geniuses led him to adopt many hopeless causes and cost him a great deal of money. His protégés borrowed so much from him, in fact, that he had to flee to Detroit to escape bankruptcy. But he was right about Harris, and some of his own books, all of them privately printed, show that he is no mean disciple. The best of them are "Sentimental Studies," "Fragments From Greenwich Village" and "The Sacred Band: a Litany of

Ingratitude." The latter contains a remarkable paper, "Walt Whitman: Twenty Years After." On the twenty-seventh anniversary of the poet's death Bruno bethought him to go to Camden, N. J., and find out what the surviving neighbors of Whitman remembered of him. The result was magnificently ironical. Walt's memory, it turned out, was not cherished in Camden, but abominated. The city librarian of the town denounced him as a mangey old loafer, a corrupter of youth, a rival to Abraham Lincoln as a retailer of smutty stories. "One of our most prominent citizens, John J. Russ, the great real estate dealer," had but a few months before objected to putting Whitman's name on a tablet in the town library. Camden in general had never heard of him at all. His place there was even lower than that of Poe in Baltimore, where it took no less than 72 years to raise enough money to put up a Poe monument—and even then the committee permitted the sculptor to misquote the poet on the pedestal! . . . The Bruno book contains other amusing stuff, including a mordant chapter on the Poe Memorial at Fordham. . . .

"Ralph Waldo Emerson," by Denton J. Snider (*Miner*), is a straightforward and useful treatise on the great Boston mullah—in fact, one of the most competent that I have ever encountered. . . . "The Note-Book of Anton Chekhov," translated by Leonard Woolf (*Huebsch*), and "Reminiscences of Anton Chekhov," by Maxim Gorky, Alexander Kuprin and I. A. Bunin (*Huebsch*), are enormously instructive and amusing, particularly the former. Chekhov was not only a writer of uncommon talents; he was also a very picturesque and charming man—a true original. These two little books bring him very close to the footlights. . . . "Goethe's Literary Essays," edited by J. E. Spingarn (*Harcourt*), is an attempt to bring the critical ideas of "the king of criticism," as Sainte-Beuve called him, into decent order, and to present them in an accurate English translation. The result is an extremely

useful and interesting work—a work that all lesser critics and reviewers would do well to wear out by hard study. . . . "Variations," by James Huneker (*Scribner*), is a volume put together by some anonymous hand, the materials being derived from Huneker's newspaper and magazine work. Unluckily, some of these materials had been reworked by the author himself, and so there are passages in "Variations" which clash with passages in "Steeplejack." For example, turn to the chapter in the former entitled "Roosevelt and Brandes." The first part of it appears with a few changes in Chapter XVI of the second volume of "Steeplejack" and the second part in Chapter XV. Again, there are the reminiscences of Antonin Dvóřak: you will find them much elaborated in Chapter VII of the same volume of "Steeplejack." Yet again, there are the passages about Oscar Hammerstein: they are in Chapter VI of "Steeplejack." It is difficult to discover any logical reason for these duplications. Huneker rewrote the stuff to his taste; why, then, reprint the first crude drafts? His changes were always improvements; he knew precisely how to tickle a clumsy, journalistic sentence into life, and how to add the phrase that lifted the commonplace to the level of the distinguished. "Variations," lacking his artful teasing up, will probably take rank as the worst of his books. But it has its moments! Every now and then there is a brilliant smear of genuine Hunekeran color.

Raymond M. Weaver's "Herman Melville: Mariner and Mystic" (*Doran*) is simply written to death. The author, it must be confessed, writes with sincerity, and he has unearthed much Melville material of considerable interest, but in his effort to pad out his book to epic proportions—and perhaps to conceal some embarrassing gaps—he has thought it necessary, not only to print elaborate summaries of all the Melville books, but also to present long and tedious treatises upon every subject ever touched by Melville's life, from the technique of whale fishing to the his-

tory of exploration in the Pacific Ocean. The result is a huge volume that is always hard to read, and often downright painful. Sometimes the bald manufacture of copy proceeds to comic lengths. On page 161, for example, the author reprints an account by Melville of the subsequent careers of the men who sailed with him on the *Acushnet*. Then, with great gravity, he proceeds to summarize that account! . . . Nevertheless, the book is useful, for no other life of Melville exists. Interest in him, set off by the success of Frederick O'Brien's "White Shadows on the South Seas" and other such contemporary treatises on anti-Presbyterian Utopias, is now very active, and he is being over-praised as greatly as he was once under-estimated. But despite Weaver's labors, many chapters of his life remain mysterious, and there is nothing in the present volume to account for him psychologically, and particularly for his strange withdrawal into obscurity. His career offers tempting invitations to the psychological explorer. Universally regarded as the archetype of the hard-boiled mariner, the hirsute he-man, he was actually the last cadet of an ancient and degenerated stock, and a moony mystic.

James L. Ford's "Forty-Odd Years in the Literary Shop" (*Dutton*) is chiefly concerned with the lesser literati of the years since 1880. Ford seems to have known them all, from Henry Guy Carleton to William Winter, and from Allen Thorndike Rice to R. K. Munkittrick. Alas, what a roster of forgotten names! Who reads Frank R. Stockton today—or remembers Miss Midy Morgan, the first woman reporter? Midy flourished long before the sob-sister era; her job on the *Times* was that of covering the horse and cattle market. Her success in this field was so great that she was promoted to the post of literary critic, and as such set the standards of criticism which the *Times* still maintains. Dr. Brander Matthews is the last of her pupils. Ford has a great deal of pleasant gossip about worthies of that sort, not only literary,

but also political, theatrical, constabulary and criminal. He knew all the old-time police captains, comedians, aldermen, soft-shoe dancers, bunco-steerers, poets, public women, assemblymen, after-dinner wits, wine agents, playwrights, city editors, news tipsters, and evangelists. He knew Frank A. Munsey before Munsey got into society. He drank more than 10,000 gallons of ale with H. C. Bunner. He was once in love with Adelaide Neilson, as was the late James G. Huneker. He was a familiar of all the old-time saloons: the House of Lords, Harry Clifton's, Owney Geoghegan's, and so on. He worked on all the dailies, weeklies, comic papers and theatrical sheets of the 80's and 90's. A fat, garrulous and very amusing book. But there was never a book that cried out more loudly for an index.

### III

#### *Nietzsche Redivivus*

DESPITE the frenetic bawling that went on against him during the war, Nietzsche seems to be making steady progress. It amuses me constantly to observe how widely his ideas are filched. The late Colonel Roosevelt borrowed a great deal more from him than a mere talent for indignation; the whole doctrine of "The Strenuous Life" originated under his broad, glistening scalp. In these later days his furious and chaotic books are quarried even more diligently. There is scarcely a Great Thinker in practise among us, in fact, who has not borrowed something from him. Now the eminently respectable firm of Doubleday, Page and Company, publishers of Gene Stratton Porter and Gerald Stanley Lee, risk an affront to the Ku Klux Klan, the American Legion and other such guardians of the national innocence by issuing a thick volume of the Prussian Antichrist's letters, translated by Anthony M. Ludovici. The German edition is much larger, but the selections here presented seem to have been made judiciously. They give us pictures of all the different

Nietzsches, from the pious Naumburg schoolboy to the glowering prophet of the last years. Dr. Oscar Levy, the Sheik ul Islam of all the Nietzscheans, provides a short introduction. As Dr. Levy shows, Nietzsche was anything but the fiery German nationalist he was accused of being during the war. As a matter of fact, he was a bitter critic of the whole German scheme of things, and his criticism was expressed in terms that must have made the German Legion of his time extremely wrathful. But this is not saying, of course, that he was very actively in favor of any rival scheme. Like most Germans, he had a certain weakness for the French, but whenever he discussed the English he denounced them even more violently than he denounced the Germans. The United States, it would seem, he had never heard of. His view of the American *Kultur* of today, if it were obtainable, would be very instructive, and perhaps a bit shocking. More Nietzsche letters are in "The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence," translated by Caroline V. Kerr and edited by the philosopher's surviving sister, Frau Elisabeth Foerster-Nietzsche (*Live-right*). All I have to say about this volume is to be found in the introduction thereof. In uniform binding the same publishers print "The George Sand-Gustave Flaubert Letters," translated by Aimée McKenzie, with an introduction by Prof. Stuart P. Sherman. Other volumes of letters are to appear in the same series.

## IV

*Sherwood Anderson*

SOME of the salient defects of Sherwood Anderson are still visible in his latest book, "The Triumph of the Egg" (*Huebsch*), notably his liking for unresolved dissonances and his frequent groping for ideas that elude him. The primary purpose of the author is plainly realistic, but he is so often brought up by riddles defying his solution that the illumination he effects is sometimes no more than a series of brief flashes of

pale light. Nevertheless, there is no denying the intrinsic force of this strange book. It simply makes a mock of all attempts at analysis. There it is—absolutely original, creepily fantastic, almost shocking in its sudden brilliances; you may take it, or you may leave it. But I doubt that even the most intransigent pedagogue will make any attempt hereafter to dispose of Anderson with a mere gesture of dismissal. His importance must now be patent even to professors of English. No other American writer of today has come nearer to evoking the essential tragedy of American life, or brought to its exhibition a finer or bolder imagination. One of the most curious things about him is his isolation, his freedom from any sign of imitativeness. So far as I can make out, he had no forerunners—and I doubt that he ever has many followers. The general stream of American writing flows on at a great distance from him, leaving him to lurk in his back-water unchallenged. What he is producing there, at its best, belongs to the very first literature of the country today. It is work that is quite unlike any other man's work, and it is full of a strange beauty and an unmistakable power.

## V

*Briefer Notices*

PTOMAIN STREET, by Carolyn Wells (*Lippincott*). An uproarious burlesque of "Main Street." Miss Wells' long series of blood-curdling detective stories has begun to make readers forget that she began as an extremely skillful and ingenious parodist. Back to Bach!

CARDINAL GIBBONS, by Albert E. Smith and Vincent De P. Fitzpatrick (*O'Donovan*). A book addressed primarily to Catholics. A sympathetic account of the late churchman's long and distinguished career, with sermons upon it by Archbishop Glennon and Bishop Shahan.

THE WANDERINGS OF A SPIRITUALIST, by Arthur Conan Doyle (*Doran*). Sherlock Holmes' account of a trip to Australia to instruct the Australians in spook-chasing. Childish nonsense.

A PARODY OUTLINE OF HISTORY, by Donald Ogden Stewart (*Doran*). A burlesque history of the United States, parodying the



styles of Cabell, Lardner, Harold Bell Wright, William Lyon Phelps, Dr. Frank Crane, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, Edith Wharton and Eugene O'Neill. Excellent fooling, and with very good pictures by Herb Roth.

DRY AMERICA, by Michael Monahan (*Brown*). THE EIGHTEENTH AMENDMENT, by Charles Taber Stout (*Kennerley*). MAN'S DESCENT FROM THE GODS, by Anthony M. Ludovici (*Knopf*). Three phillipics against prohibition. Ludovici tackles it with mythology, Stout with science, and Monahan with wit. All three do devastating execution upon the blue-noses.

GEORG GROSZ, by Hi Simons (*Musterbook-house*). An intelligent account of one of the most fantastic of the current German painters, with reproductions of twelve of his lithographs. The greatest of them, "Tumult," is not included, but those that are given admirably exhibit his manner.

WHILE I REMEMBER, by Stephen McKenna (*Doran*). An extremely dull and obvious history of the years 1906-1920, with banal reflections.

THROUGH THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, by Albert Rhys Williams (*Liveright*). A lyrical volume on the virtues of the Bolsheviks, elaborately illustrated.

ROVING EAST AND ROVING WEST, by E. V. Lucas (*Doran*). Extremely inconsequential travel-notes, including some extra flabby ones on the United States.

TIRED RADICALS, by Walter Weyl (*Huebsch*). A document in the history of American Liberalism, covering the days before the Great Disillusionment. Mr. Weyl (who has since died) argues that Woodrow was quite honest at Paris! On other subjects he is less old-fashioned, particularly on China and Japan.

AND EVEN NOW, by Max Beerbohm (*Dutton*). The Beerbohmian wit, alas, begins to run thin. A book that wears out before it is half done.

NOTES AND REVIEWS, by Henry James (*Dunster House*). A selection from the early book reviews of James, beautifully printed. Most of them are quite hollow—the correct stuff that every young college literatus writes. But now and then there is a gleam of sagacity.

HARBOURS OF MEMORY, by William McFee (*Doubleday*). A collection of glowing

sketches by the author of "Captain Mace-doine's Daughter." A book clearly above the ordinary.

IN DAYS TO COME, by Walter Rathenau (*Knopf*). Reflections, social and political, of the German Admirable Crichton.

LITTLE RAYS OF MOONSHINE, by A. P. Herbert (*Knopf*). A volume of light pieces by the author of "The Secret Battle."

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON, by John Jay Chapman (*Atlantic Monthly Press*). A rhetorical biography of the celebrated Abolitionist, full of fustian and bathos. Why doesn't someone write an intelligent life of him?

MEN, WOMEN AND BOATS, by Stephen Crane (*Liveright*). A Modern Library collection of Crane's short stories, including several not hitherto printed in a book, with an intelligent introduction by Vincent Starrett.

THE SECRET OF THE SAHARA, by Rosita Forbes (*Doran*). Narrative of a journey to the oasis of Kufara in the eastern Sahara. Many illustrations.

LONDON RIVER, by H. M. Tomlinson (*Knopf*). The Thames done by a poet—glowing, romantic, a bit mysterious and sinister. A book of genuine distinction.

THE HISTORY OF MANKIND, by Hendrik Willem Van Loon (*Liveright*). The best book ever heard of to give a boy. Something extraordinary. More of it anon.

PASTICHE AND PREJUDICE, by A. B. Walkley (*Knopf*). Casual essays by the dramatic critic of the *London Times*. A bit thin in general, but with brilliant flashes.

THE CROW'S NEST, by Clarence Day (*Knopf*). More malicious essays by the author of "This Simian World."

ROOSEVELT THE HAPPY WARRIOR, by Bradley Gilman (*Little-Brown*). Sentimental reminiscences by a life-long worshipper.

LORDS OF THE HOUSETOPS, by Carl Van Vechten (*Knopf*). A collection of stories about cats. Some of the authors represented are Balzac, Mark Twain, Poe, W. H. Hudson and Algernon Blackwood.

THE ENJOYMENT OF MUSIC, by Arthur W. Pollitt (*Doran*). A somewhat heavy and ineffective attempt to expound the fundamental principles of music to the congenitally tone-deaf.





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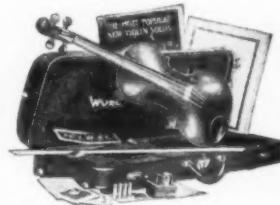
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